



DOCUMENTS ON  
BRITISH  
FOREIGN POLICY  
1919—1939

EDITED BY  
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## PREFACE TO THE COLLECTION

THE decision to publish a collection of Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-39, was announced in the House of Commons by Mr. Eden, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, on March 29, 1944, in the following terms:

'His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have decided to publish the most important documents in the Foreign Office archives relating to British foreign policy between 1919 and 1939. The documents will be published in a series of volumes which will be issued one by one as and when they are ready. The volumes will form a continuous chronological series, but in order to make available as soon as possible documents dealing with events most relevant to the outbreak of the present war, it is proposed, for purposes of publication, to divide the work into two parts: the first part to begin with the year 1919, and the second part to begin with the year 1930. The preparation of each part will be undertaken simultaneously.'

Mr. E. L. Woodward, Professor of International Relations in the University of Oxford and Fellow of Balliol College, was entrusted by the Secretary of State with the general planning and production of the Collection. Mr. Rohan Butler, Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, joined Mr. Woodward as co-editor in January 1945, and has undertaken the production of the first series, while Mr. Woodward has continued the production of the second series of volumes.

In carrying out the instructions of the Secretary of State the editors have been faced with three main problems: (i) what documents were to be printed in the collection, (ii) how were these documents to be arranged, and (iii) what editorial notes were necessary for the assistance of readers?

The nature of these problems of selection, arrangement, and annotation can be described as follows:

### (i) *Selection of documents*

In 1913 the number of despatches, &c., received at the Foreign Office was 68,119. The figures for the years 1935-8 were 169,248 in 1935, 187,878 in 1936, 201,323 in 1937, 223,879 in 1938. Obviously a large proportion of these papers dealt with matters outside the range of high policy, but in recent times the extension of the field of State action and the consequent increase in the number of questions discussed between Government and Government have changed the nature of foreign policy in comparison with the traditional interpretation given to it in the nineteenth century. The problem of selecting the documents relevant to the present Collection is therefore more complicated than in the case of the *Documents on the Origins of the War* (of 1914-18). It has been necessary to make a more elaborate 'scale of priorities' and to determine the place of documents in this scale according to their bearing upon the course of events ending in the outbreak of war in 1939. Since the

first business of British diplomacy has long been the maintenance of peace, the course of events between 1919 and 1939 may be described more specifically from a diplomatic point of view as the breakdown of the machinery for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

In a scale of priorities thus decided the first right of entry had to be given to instructions sent to His Majesty's Missions abroad, to reports from these Missions of business transacted with foreign Governments, and to records of negotiations conducted through representatives of foreign Governments in London. It has also been necessary to include records, in some cases *verbatim*, of the proceedings of international conferences attended by His Majesty's Ministers of State.

The first duty of the editors, therefore, has been to print these indispensable documents and then, in the space available without making the Collection so unwieldy that it would defeat its purpose, to include other documents of an informative rather than of an executive kind. Such 'informative' documents consist for the most part of despatches and telegrams from His Majesty's Missions abroad on the general political and economic situation in the countries within their sphere of observation. In the years after 1919 reports on economic conditions were more frequent and also more technical than in earlier times, and it is possible only by reading these reports to measure the level of expert knowledge upon which decisions of policy were based.

Without any of these 'informative' documents, therefore, the present Collection would be incomplete, but it is impracticable, owing to their number and bulk, to publish all of them. Here again, on the principle of a 'scale of priorities', those documents have been chosen which bear directly upon the main decisions of policy.

In order to allow publication in full of as many unprinted documents as possible, two other principles of selection have been adopted, although in each case exceptions have been made. (1) Documents, especially those of great length, already available to the public have not been reprinted. Thus, as a general rule, published minutes and reports of the proceedings of the Assembly and Council of the League of Nations and of Conferences or other meetings held under the auspices of the League have not been included. These League documents contain declarations and acts of policy of the highest importance. Without reference to them it is impossible to obtain a complete account of the attitude of His Majesty's Government on the issues of the years covered by the present Collection. The question of bulk, however, has made republication impracticable. (For example, the minutes of the second part of the Sixth Session of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference take up 620 folio pages of print.)

(2) Foreign Office minutes on incoming despatches and telegrams have not been included except in cases where these minutes add important details of fact not otherwise recorded. As a rule it is unnecessary to print minutes since the executive decisions taken on incoming material are given in the outgoing despatches and telegrams. In any case, in view of the custom of the Foreign Office since 1919, the number of such minutes is very great and their

inclusion would more than double the size of the Collection. It would rarely be possible to make a selection from the minutes since each writer refers to the previous minute and one minute is, therefore, not intelligible unless read in its full context. This consideration applies also to final minutes by the Secretary of State. Furthermore, in view of the very great increase in the business of the Secretary of State, it has become impossible for him as a habit to write his views at length in the form of minutes on documents submitted to him. Even so, the practice of successive Secretaries of State since 1919 has varied to such an extent that the inclusion of their minutes would give a misleading impression.

(ii) *Arrangement of documents*

After determining the principles upon which the Collection should be based, the editors had to decide roughly between two methods of arrangement: (a) chronological, (b) according to subject. On a chronological method documents would be printed strictly according to date and irrespective of their contents and subject-matter. This method has the advantage of allowing the reader to see the business of the Foreign Office as it appeared to the Secretary of State and to members of the Office who had to deal simultaneously with a number of widely different negotiations and problems, i.e. the method makes it easier to see the mutual interaction and inter-relation of these problems. On the other hand, the disadvantages of a chronological method without any 'sorting out' into subjects are too obvious to need mention. These disadvantages are especially troublesome for readers wishing to follow the history of any one problem or of the relations between Great Britain and any single country.

After full consideration the editors decided to adopt a compromise between the two methods, with emphasis upon the method of arrangement according to subject. Each volume, as far as possible, will cover documents within a given period of time. The volumes in their order will represent a chronological series, but they will be divided into chapters each of which will deal with a subject defined in the chapter-heading; a subject and not necessarily a country, since many subjects affect negotiations with more than one country.

(iii) *Annotation of documents*

As in the case of the selection of the documents, the problem of annotation is simple up to a point and is then determined by the question of space. The editors must supply (i) cross references within the Collection, (ii) short summaries of despatches and telegrams not included in the Collection but referred to in documents selected for printing. Where these references are unimportant or not relevant, the documents concerned are noted as 'Not printed'.

Beyond this point there is hardly any limit to the possible number and length of footnotes. In fact, the limit is set by the need to economize space.

The notes, therefore, are confined to the mention of the most important facts and dates necessary for understanding the sequence of events and negotiations with which the documents are concerned.

The editors have also supplied an analytical table of contents for each volume. They propose to provide a general index for the volumes of each of the two series.

E. L. WOODWARD

ROHAN BUTLER

*June, 1946.*

## PREFACE

### TO VOLUME I, SECOND SERIES

THE decision to divide this Collection into two series of volumes (each series to be published concurrently) was taken to avoid a long delay before the appearance of the volumes dealing with the events immediately preceding the outbreak of war on September 3, 1939. It was realized, however, that the decision would involve certain difficulties in the selection of documents for the first volume of the second series, since this volume would be continuing the record in the last volume of the first series. Moreover, although the signature of the treaty of peace with Germany on June 28, 1919, is a convenient starting-point for the first series, there is no such convenient date for the beginning of the second series. The conclusion of the Locarno agreements in the autumn of 1925 is too early a date; the assumption of power by the National Socialist party early in 1933 is too late.

The year 1930 seemed the best choice not merely because it was almost half-way in time between 1919 and 1939. The choice of this date brought within the compass of the second series (i) the consequences of the world economic depression, (ii) the policy of His Majesty's Government in relation to the limitation and reduction of armaments before the opening of the Disarmament Conference in 1932, and (iii) the course of Anglo-German relations during the period before the collapse of the German republic.

On the other hand, the year 1930 marked the end of a long series of negotiations which had followed logically as well as in fact from the Locarno agreements. The year began with the second session of The Hague Conference at which agreement was reached on the final evacuation of the Occupied Territory in Germany and on the 'Young Plan' for a settlement of the question of Reparation. The editor therefore had to decide whether to begin the first volume of the second series with the documents dealing with The Hague Conference or to leave those documents for inclusion in the last volume of the first series. On the whole, since some overlap was inevitable, it seemed better to regard the two sessions of The Hague Conference as belonging to the first series and as concluding the history of the Rhineland occupation and of Reparation payments before the world economic depression altered the character of this latter question. Similarly, the best starting-point for an account of Anglo-German relations is not January 1, 1930, but the formation of Dr. Brüning's administration in March 1930, after the ratification of the 'Young Plan'. It is also convenient to bring the chapter on Anglo-German relations down to March 1931, i.e. immediately before the announcement of the Austro-German proposals for a customs union. After the evacuation of the Rhineland, His Majesty's Government had little political business with the German Government during this first year of Dr. Brüning's administration, and the documents printed

are important mainly for the light thrown by them on the information secured by His Majesty's Government about domestic events in Germany.

The history of Anglo-German relations from March to December 1931 will be dealt with in Volume II. This volume will also cover the financial crisis of 1931, and the negotiations during the latter half of the year with a view to the Conference ultimately held at Lausanne in July 1932.

The larger part of Volume I is concerned with the question of the limitation and reduction of naval armaments. The London Naval Conference opened in January 1930. The Conference was preceded by negotiations with the Government of the United States and was followed by efforts, in which His Majesty's Government took a leading part, to bring about a naval agreement between France and Italy. The documents in Volume I, therefore, (i) trace the course of the Anglo-American negotiations after the formation of Mr. MacDonald's administration in June 1929, (ii) supplement material about the London Conference which is already printed, and (iii) bring the Anglo-Franco-Italian negotiations down to the acceptance by the French and Italian Governments of the 'Bases of Agreement' in April 1931. The breakdown of this agreement is described in Volume II. These documents on naval disarmament are printed at length because the negotiations, unlike those concerned with disarmament on land and in the air, took place mainly outside the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference at Geneva and therefore a record of them is not included in material already published by the League of Nations.

Finally, Chapter IV of Volume I contains documents illustrating the attitude of His Majesty's Government towards M. Briand's plan for a European Federal Union. These documents show the policy of His Majesty's Government on the question of international co-operation within the framework of the League of Nations.

In taking full responsibility for the choice of documents and for all editorial notes in this volume, the editor wishes to thank officials of the Foreign Office who have given him most valuable help. In particular he is grateful to the staff of the Foreign Office Library for their constant care in securing for him all material bearing upon the subjects in the volume, and to Miss A. Norman for secretarial assistance and advice on matters of official routine and procedure.

E. L. WOODWARD

## NOTE

### TO VOLUME I, SECOND SERIES

THE following general notes may be of use to readers of the documents in this Collection.

1. Unless otherwise stated in the Collection,

- (a) All communications received in the Foreign Office from His Majesty's Missions abroad are addressed to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
- (b) All communications sent by the Foreign Office to Missions abroad are sent to the Head or Acting Head of the Mission.
- (c) All British officials mentioned in the documents are members of the Foreign Office or, as the context shows, of His Majesty's Missions abroad.

2. Records of conversations between the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs or members of the Foreign Office and representatives of a foreign Government in London and copies of communications from such representatives are normally sent to the Head or Acting Head of His Majesty's Mission in the country concerned. For this purpose the record of the conversation is drafted in the form of a telegram or despatch. A similar practice is followed by His Majesty's Missions abroad in transmitting communications from foreign Governments or information to the Secretary of State. The character and urgency of the business decide the choice between a telegram or despatch. A telegram is usually followed by a despatch giving a fuller account of the conversation or communication, but in cases where a long telegram or succession of telegrams has been sent or received, it may not be necessary to follow them with a despatch or despatches.

In order to avoid duplication and at the same time not to exclude material of importance, the editor has adopted the following rules with regard to the printing of telegrams and despatches covering the same business.

- (a) A telegram is printed when action was taken or a reply sent before the receipt of a despatch.
- (b) The later despatch is also printed if it contains relevant matter not included in the telegram.
- (c) A telegram is not printed if no action was taken on it and no reply sent before the receipt of a despatch.
- (d) A despatch is not printed if it is merely confirmatory and adds nothing of importance to the information already sent by telegram.

It should be added that records are made of all important telephone conversations and that these records are treated similarly to the records of conversations or of communications.

3. There are passages in the incoming telegrams printed in this Collection where the text is uncertain. These *lacunae* are all of a minor kind, since in



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There is no difficulty in establishing or checking the text of outward telegrams since the authorized drafts are kept in the Foreign Office archives.

4. The dates of despatch of all outgoing communications and of despatch and receipt of incoming communications have been printed in the Collection. In certain cases it has also been necessary to print the hour of despatch or receipt. The hour of despatch in the case of incoming telegrams is noted according to the standard time in the place of despatch (i.e. a telegram from Washington is noted according to Washington time and the hour may therefore appear to be earlier than that of Greenwich time or British Summer Time, at which it is noted as received).

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# CHAPTER SUMMARIES

## CHAPTER I

### Anglo-American discussions preparatory to the London Naval Conference (May 23–October 5, 1929)

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
INTRODUCTORY NOTE	.	.	3
1 SIR E. HOWARD Washington No. 981	May 23	Reports conversation with Mr. Stimson regarding the reception at Geneva of the American proposals, and the prospects of Anglo-American agreement.	7
2 To SIR J. TILLEY Tokyo No. 275	June 18	Reports Japanese Ambassador's conversation with Sir R. Lindsay and inquiries as to the course which negotiations with the U.S.A. were likely to follow.	7
3 To SIR E. HOWARD Washington No. 946	June 24	Reports informal conversation between Mr. MacDonald and General Dawes regarding lines on which subsequent conversations might be conducted.	8
4 MR. MACDONALD	June 25	Memorandum of a conversation with General Dawes and Mr. Gibson.	10
5 SIR R. LINDSAY	June 25	Minute on the conversation of June 25, 1929, between Mr. MacDonald, General Dawes, and Mr. Gibson.	11
6 MR. CRAIGIE	June 26	Reports conversation with Mr. Gibson on the desirability of holding a conference and on the question of a 'yardstick' for estimating the equivalent values of cruiser strength.	13
7 MR. CRAIGIE	June 27	Further conversation with Mr. Gibson on the importance of adequate preparation for a conference.	15
8 MR. MACDONALD	June 28	Notes of conversation in which General Dawes and Mr. Atherton communicated points for discussion contained in a despatch from Mr. Stimson.	16
9 SIR R. VANSITTART	June 28	Notes of conversation between Mr. MacDonald and General Dawes in which the latter explained views of the President and Mr. Stimson.	17
10 SIR E. HOWARD Washington No. 1243	June 28	Reports conversation with Mr. Stimson on the necessity for adequate preparation and for discussions between the Naval Powers.	18
11 MR. A. CADOGAN	July 6	Letter to M. Massigli informing him of the position in regard to the discussions with the U.S. Government.	19



NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
12 MR. MACDONALD	July 8	Letter to General Dawes suggesting an announcement of Anglo-American agreement to take the Pact of Paris as a starting-point for negotiations with a view to reduction in existing armaments on a basis of Anglo-American parity.	19
13 To SIR J. TILLEY Tokyo Tel. No. 123	July 9	Reports Mr. MacDonald's assurances to the Japanese Ambassador that H.M.G. and the U.S. Government had no intention of presenting other nations with a <i>fait accompli</i> .	20
14 MR. MACDONALD	July 11	Note to General Dawes suggesting that the laying of keels should be slowed down.	21
15 SIR J. TILLEY Tokyo Tel. No. 154	July 12	Reports conversation with Minister for Foreign Affairs who asked unofficially whether anything was being done about working out a 'yardstick'.	21
16 GENERAL DAWES	July 12	Letter to Mr. MacDonald communicating a message from the President commenting on Mr. MacDonald's proposals and suggesting some variants in procedure.	22
17 MR. MACDONALD	July 14	Minute recording conversation with General Dawes respecting Mr. MacDonald's projected visit to the United States and the slowing down of cruiser building.	23
18 To SIR J. TILLEY Tokyo Tel. No. 128	July 16	Suggests that Japanese Government should work out possibilities of a 'yardstick'.	24
19 MR. MACDONALD	July 17	Letter to General Dawes setting out the position reached in the conversations.	24
20 GENERAL DAWES	July 22	Memorandum communicated to Mr. MacDonald giving the comments of the U.S. Government on his letter (No. 19) of July 17.	26
21 MR. MACDONALD	July 23	Letter to General Dawes referring to the problem of cruiser tonnage.	28
22 MR. MACDONALD	July 24	Letter to General Dawes on the evaluation of the two cruiser fleets.	28
23 SIR E. HOWARD Washington Tel. No. 328	July 25	Reports conversation with the President.	30
24 Memorandum	July 29	Points covered by agreement reached between Mr. MacDonald and General Dawes as a result of their conversations.	31
25 MR. MACDONALD	July 29	Memorandum by Mr. MacDonald on a proposal for agreement as to cruisers.	33
26 MR. MACDONALD	July 30	Letter to General Dawes expressing satisfaction with the agreement arrived at and suggesting minor amendments.	33

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
27 MR. CRAIGIE	July 30	Memorandum reporting conversation with the Japanese Ambassador who asked for elucidation of certain points with regard to cruisers, 'yardstick', &c.	34
28 MR. MACDONALD	Aug. 8	Letter to General Dawes reporting efforts to meet Mr. Hoover's desire to get parity as well as reduction and explaining the reasons for the British cruiser figures.	36
29 SIR J. TILLEY Tokyo Tel. No. 180	Aug. 12	Reports Japanese difficulties over the 'yardstick'; question of ratios.	38
30 SIR E. HOWARD Washington Tel. No. 368	Aug. 16	Reports conversation in which Mr. Stimson transmitted the President's invitation to Mr. MacDonald.	39
31 SIR E. HOWARD Washington Tel. No. 369	Aug. 16	Transmits invitation to Mr. MacDonald to stay at the White House.	39
32 GENERAL DAWES	Aug. 15	Memorandum communicated to Mr. MacDonald giving the comments of the U.S. Government on Mr. MacDonald's letter of August 8. (No. 28.)	40
33 TO SIR E. HOWARD Washington Tel. No. 392	Aug. 20	Mr. MacDonald thinks his visit would be beneficial even if naval agreement were not reached beforehand.	46
34 SIR E. HOWARD Washington Tel. No. 377	Aug. 21	Reports agreement of President and Mr. Stimson that the visit would be most beneficial.	46
35 MR. MACDONALD	Aug. 23	Letter to General Dawes in reply to the memorandum (No. 32) communicated to Mr. MacDonald.	47
36 MR. CRAIGIE	Aug. 26	Memorandum of conversation with Mr. Belin on the desirability of hastening the Anglo-American negotiations and on the difficulties with regard to the proposed 'yardstick'.	51
37 GENERAL DAWES	Aug. 29	Memorandum communicated to Mr. MacDonald in reply to his letter of August 23 (No. 35).	53
38 GENERAL DAWES	Aug. 29	Memorandum communicated to Mr. MacDonald giving a review of the points of agreement with a view to simplifying the discussion.	57
39 GENERAL DAWES	Aug. 29	Memorandum communicated to Mr. MacDonald giving Mr. Stimson's reasons for not producing a 'yardstick'.	58
40 MR. MACDONALD	Aug. 30	Letter to General Dawes enclosing comments in detail on the American notes (Nos. 37-9) communicated to Mr. MacDonald.	59
41 MR. MACDONALD	Aug. 30	Comments referred to in No. 40.	61

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
42 MR. MACDONALD	Sept. 2	Records conversation at Geneva with the Japanese Ambassador in which the Ambassador made it clear that Japan would base a ratio in cruisers on the American figures.	63
43 SIR E. HOWARD Washington Tel. No. 407	Sept. 4	Transmits inquiry from Sir R. Vansittart as to minimum reduction which it was desired to obtain in the American figures.	65
44 TO MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 104	Sept. 4	Reports information that U.S. Government would be unable to reply to Mr. MacDonald's letters (Nos. 40 and 41) in time for any further statement at Geneva.	65
45 TO SIR E. HOWARD Washington Tel. No. 431	Sept. 5	Replies to question in No. 43.	66
46 MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 98, L.N.	Sept. 5	Message for General Dawes from Mr. MacDonald on the question of a statement at Geneva.	66
47 SIR E. HOWARD Washington Tel. No. 414	Sept. 5	Message for Mr. MacDonald from Sir R. Vansittart reporting interviews with the President and Mr. Stimson.	67
48 GENERAL DAWES	Sept. 4	Memorandum communicated to Mr. MacDonald about the difficulties raised by the proposals in Nos. 40 and 41.	68
49 MR. MACDONALD	Sept. 9	Letter to General Dawes summarizing the proposals to the U.S. Government regarding cruisers.	69
50 TO SIR E. HOWARD Washington Tel. No. 436	Sept. 9	Message from Mr. MacDonald that difficulties in reaching adjustment of parity made him uncertain whether his visit was advisable.	71
51 SIR E. HOWARD Washington Tel. No. 425	Sept. 10	Message for Mr. MacDonald to the effect that the President and Mr. Stimson hoped that he would come to Washington; they suggested, however, that he should postpone his decision until he had seen the latest figures worked out by the Navy Department.	72
52 SIR E. HOWARD Washington Tel. No. 426	Sept. 10	Recommends that the meeting between Mr. MacDonald and the President should take place even if agreement had not been reached on all points.	73
53 TO SIR E. HOWARD Washington Tel. No. 439	Sept. 12	Message from Mr. MacDonald about plans and dates for his visit.	73
54 GENERAL DAWES	Sept. 12	Memorandum communicated to Mr. MacDonald giving new proposals of the U.S. Government on the cruiser question.	74
55 GENERAL DAWES	Sept. 12	Further memorandum communicated to Mr. MacDonald on the cruiser question, and message that the President earnestly desired Mr. MacDonald's visit.	75

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
56 GENERAL DAWES	Sept. 12	Memorandum communicated to Mr. MacDonald setting out the draft terms of an agreement.	76
57 SIR E. HOWARD Washington Tel. No. 431	Sept. 12	Message for Mr. MacDonald from Sir R. Vansittart reporting a conversation with the President, who considered difference to be so small that it should be left to be bridged at the Conference.	77
58 MR. MACDONALD	Sept. 13	Letter to General Dawes accepting in principle the American memorandum of agreement and discussing the date for calling the proposed Conference.	78
59 MR. MACDONALD	Sept. 13	Letter to General Dawes suggesting amendments to the text of the American memorandum.	81
60 GENERAL DAWES	Sept. 16	Memorandum communicated to Mr. MacDonald suggesting that the agreement should not be published until after his meeting with the President.	82
61 MR. MACDONALD	Sept. 17	Letter to General Dawes suggesting that invitations to the Conference should be issued before Mr. MacDonald's Washington visit.	83
62 Draft note to French, Italian, Japanese Ambassadors		Draft note of invitation to the Naval Conference.	84
63 GENERAL DAWES	Sept. 19	Memorandum to Mr. MacDonald transmitting a letter from the President discussing the cruiser question and making suggestions for slowing down the construction of capital ships.	87
64 GENERAL DAWES	Sept. 18	Memorandum communicated to Mr. MacDonald transmitting a message that the President and Mr. Stimson had serious objections to the proposed invitation (No. 62) and would prefer that it should not be issued until after Mr. MacDonald's visit.	91
65 GENERAL DAWES	Sept. 19	Memorandum communicated to Mr. MacDonald setting out the American objections to the proposed form of invitation.	91
66 American draft of the Note of Invitation		American Draft Note of invitation to the London Naval Conference.	92
67 MR. MACDONALD	Sept. 23	Letter to General Dawes commenting on the President's letter (No. 63).	94
68 SIR R. LINDSAY	Sept. 25	Memorandum reporting interviews with the French, Italian, and Japanese Ambassadors on the subject of preparation for the Conference.	97
69 Draft Note to French, Italian, Japanese Ambassadors		Revised draft of the proposed note of invitation to the Naval Conference.	99

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
70 To Mr. CRAIGIE Tel. Unnumbered	Oct. 2	Reports (i) General Dawes's wish that the note of invitation should be issued before Mr. MacDonald's arrival in Washington, (ii) Admiralty views on further American amendments to the draft note.	100
71 To SIR E. HOWARD Washington Tel. No. 489	Oct. 3	Message for the information of Mr. MacDonald that the U.S. Government would probably try to secure a reduction of the proposed British cruiser strength of 339,000 tons.	101
72 MR. CRAIGIE Tel. Unnumbered	Oct. 3	Mr. MacDonald's reply to Admiralty objections to the wording of the draft note.	102
73 To SIR E. HOWARD Washington Tel. No. 495	Oct. 4	Reports that Mr. MacDonald's proposed amendment to note was being submitted to the U.S. Government.	102
74 To SIR E. HOWARD Washington Tel. No. 498	Oct. 5	U.S. Government agree to the amendment; invitations to be issued on October 7.	103
75 To French, Italian, Japanese Ambassadors	Oct. 7	Note of invitation to the Naval Conference.	103
76 To GENERAL DAWES	Oct. 7	Transmits copies of the note of invitation.	105

## CHAPTER II

### Mr. MacDonald's visit to the United States: Correspondence regarding the Five-Power Conference (October 4, 1929-January 21, 1930)

77 Memorandum	Oct. 4-10, 1929	Conversations between Mr. MacDonald and President Hoover at Washington. I. Naval question. II. Rights and immunities at sea in time of war. III. British naval stations in the Western Hemisphere. IV. Co-operative action for the reinforcement of world peace. Appendix A (to above) Nos. 1-12. Correspondence between Mr. MacDonald and the Foreign Office on above subjects.	106        116
78 MR. ATHERTON	Oct. 10	Reports American acceptance of the invitation to the Naval Conference.	125
79 LORD TYRRELL Paris No. 1416	Oct. 14	Reports on the impression made in France by the invitation to the Naval Conference and Mr. MacDonald's visit to America.	125
80 SIGNOR BORDONARO	Oct. 15	Reports Italian acceptance of the invitation.	128

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
81 MR. MATSUDAIRA	Oct. 16	Reports Japanese acceptance of the invitation.	129
82 M. DE FLEURIAU	Oct. 16	Reports French acceptance of the invitation.	130
83 SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 129	Oct. 30	Reports information from Italian Foreign Minister on Italian attitude towards submarine question.	132
84 MR. R. I. CAMPBELL Washington Tel. No. 535	Nov. 9	Reports conversation with Mr. Stimson on Japanese request for increased cruiser ratio.	132
85 Tels. to Washington, No. 565; Paris, No. 255; Rome, No. 198; Tokyo, No. 188	Nov. 9	Date of the Conference: delegates should not be technical experts.	133
86 SIR R. GRAHAM Rome No. 757	Nov. 11	Reports further conversation with Italian Foreign Minister on the attitude of the Italian Government towards the submarine question.	134
87 To MR. R. I. CAMPBELL Washington Tel. No. 571	Nov. 12	Replies to points raised by Mr. Stimson with regard to Japanese claim for increased cruiser ratio.	135
88 MR. R. I. CAMPBELL Washington Tel. No. 545	Nov. 14	Reports that U.S. Government were refusing to agree to Japanese demand for increased cruiser ratio.	136
89 To LORD TYRRELL Paris No. 2440	Nov. 15	Reports conversation between Mr. MacDonald and M. de Fleuriau on the forthcoming Conference. M. de Fleuriau stated that France could not agree to parity with Italy.	137
90 To SIR R. GRAHAM Rome No. 1269	Nov. 15	Reports conversation between Mr. MacDonald and Signor Bordonaro on the forthcoming Conference. Signor Bordonaro said that Italy would seek parity with France.	138
91 To SIR J. TILLEY Tokyo Tel. No. 192	Nov. 16	Reports conversation between Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Matsudaira on the British attitude toward the Japanese claim for an increased cruiser ratio.	139
92 To MR. R. I. CAMPBELL Washington Tel. No. 584	Nov. 16	Instructions to speak to Mr. Stimson with regard to the Japanese claim.	140
93 MR. R. I. CAMPBELL Washington Tel. No. 550	Nov. 19	Reports conversation with Mr. Stimson.	140
94 MR. ATHERTON	Nov. 19	Letter to Sir R. Vansittart enclosing a questionnaire received from the French naval attaché in Washington together with an <i>aide-mémoire</i> giving the U.S. Government's reply.	141

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
95 To SIR J. TILLEY Tokyo Tel. No. 195	Nov. 20	Reports further conversation between Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Matsudaira with regard to the Japanese claim.	143
96 MR. R. I. CAMPBELL Washington Tel. No. 553	Nov. 20	Comments on his conversation (No. 93) with Mr. Stimson.	144
97 To MR. R. I. CAMPBELL Washington Tel. No. 593	Nov. 22	Reports substance of Mr. MacDonald's conversations with the French and Italian Ambassadors for the information of the U.S. Secretary of State.	145
98 MR. R. I. CAMPBELL Washington Tel. No. 559	Nov. 23	Reports Mr. Stimson's comments on the reply (No. 87) to the points raised by him with regard to the Japanese claim.	146
99 To MR. R. I. CAMPBELL Washington No. 1634	Nov. 25	Reports conversation between Mr. MacDonald and General Dawes regarding (i) the Japanese claim (ii) American representation at the Conference.	147
100 SIR R. GRAHAM Rome No. 785	Nov. 22	Reports information from Signor Grandi with regard to Franco-Italian conversations in preparation for the Conference.	148
101 To MR. R. I. CAMPBELL Washington Tels. Nos. 604-6	Nov. 26	Comments on Mr. Stimson's views (No. 96) with regard to the Japanese claim.	149
102 To MR. R. H. CAMPBELL Paris No. 2513	Nov. 26	Reports information given by Mr. MacDonald to M. de Fleuriau on the attitude of H.M.G. towards various questions to be discussed at the Conference.	149
103 To MR. R. I. CAMPBELL Washington Tels. Nos. 610-11	Nov. 29	Draft agenda and suggestions for procedure at the Conference.	151
104 MR. R. I. CAMPBELL Washington Tel. No. 564	Nov. 30	Reports Mr. Stimson's views on the question of procedure at the Conference.	152
105 MR. R. I. CAMPBELL Washington Tel. No. 565	Dec. 1	Comments on Mr. Stimson's views reported in No. 104.	153
106 MR. R. I. CAMPBELL Washington Tel. No. 566	Dec. 1	Further report on conversation in No. 104.	154
107 MR. R. I. CAMPBELL Washington No. 567	Dec. 2	Reports further conversation with Mr. Stimson and Mr. Marriner about procedure.	154
108 MR. R. I. CAMPBELL Washington No. 568	Dec. 2	Further report on conversation in No. 107.	156
109 To SIR J. TILLEY Tokyo Tel. No. 204	Dec. 2	Conversation between Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Matsudaira on November 29 with regard to details of Japanese claim.	156

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
110 MR. CRAIGIE	Dec. 3	Letter to Mr. Atherton commenting on <i>aide-mémoire</i> to the U.S. Government (No. 94).	157
111 To MR. R. I. CAMPBELL Washington Tel. No. 624	Dec. 9	Instructions to communicate amended agenda and suggestions for procedure to the U.S. Government for their observations.	159
112 To MR. R. I. CAMPBELL Washington Tel. No. 625 (Also to Paris, Rome, and Tokyo)	Dec. 9	Amended draft agenda and suggestions for procedure.	159
113 To MR. R. H. CAMPBELL Paris Tel. No. 287 (Also to Rome and Tokyo)	Dec. 9	Instructions to communicate No. 112 to the French Government for their observations.	160
114 MR. CRAIGIE	Dec. 10	Note on a conversation with the Italian Chargé d'Affaires to whom Mr. Craigie explained the proposals of H.M.G.	161
115 To SIR J. TILLEY Tokyo Tel. No. 220	Dec. 11	Reports statement by Mr. MacDonald on December 9 to Mr. Matsudaira that H.M.G. could not accept the Japanese claim.	162
116 SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 144	Dec. 11	Reports that Italy will support H.M.G. on the submarine question.	163
117 SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 150	Dec. 15	Reports views of Italian Government on proposals transmitted to them (Nos. 112 and 113).	163
118 SIR E. HOWARD Washington Tel. No. 588	Dec. 16	Reports Mr. Stimson's comments on proposed agenda and procedure.	165
119 LORD TYRRELL Paris No. 1696	Dec. 16	Transmits memorandum from the French Government in reply to No. 112. A more detailed memorandum is to be expected in which the question of security will be raised.	166
120 MR. CRAIGIE	Dec. 18	Memorandum on conversation with M. Massigli on the policy of the French Government and the principles upon which they would act at the Conference.	167
121 To SIR E. HOWARD Washington Tel. No. 659	Dec. 20	Personal message from Mr. MacDonald to Mr. Stimson suggesting that on latter's arrival they should resume conversations on the cruiser question.	171
122 To LORD TYRRELL Paris No. 2743	Dec. 21	Reports interview of Mr. Henderson on December 19 with the French Ambassador and M. Massigli.	171



NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
123 M. DE FLEURIAU	Dec. 20	Memorandum communicated by the French Government setting out in detail their views on the question.	173
124 SIR J. TILLEY Tokyo Tel. No. 262	Dec. 21	Reports observations of the Japanese Government on the proposed agenda and procedure (Nos. 112 and 113).	178
125 SIR E. HOWARD Washington Tel. No. 601	Dec. 22	Reports arrangements agreed with Mr. Stimson.	179
126 LORD TYRRELL Paris No. 1748	Dec. 27	Gives summary of French and Italian memoranda exchanged on the naval question.	179
127 To SIR E. HOWARD Washington Tel. No. 683	Dec. 29	Instructions to inform Mr. Stimson that H.M.G. would not accept the French suggestion of a treaty of non-aggression between the Mediterranean Powers but that Mr. MacDonald would be glad to discuss with Mr. Stimson the possibility of an extension of the principle of 'consultation'.	183
128 Spanish Ambassador	Dec. 30	Memorandum from the Spanish Government deprecating any discussion of the Mediterranean question at a conference in which the Spanish Government were not taking part.	183
129 LORD TYRRELL Paris Tel. No. 187	Dec. 30	Reports on M. Tardieu's conversations with the American Ambassador, and on French desire that the proceedings of the Conference should be linked up with the Preparatory Disarmament Commission.	185
130 SIR E. HOWARD Washington Tel. No. 619	Dec. 31	Reports Mr. Stimson's views on the proposals in No. 127.	186
131 SIR R. LINDSAY	Jan. 1 1930	Records conversation with the Spanish Ambassador on the contingent request of the Spanish Government to be represented at the London Conference.	187
132 To LORD TYRRELL Paris No. 34	Jan. 3 1930	Instructions to explain to French Government that H.M.G. regard as undesirable any public statements of principles at the opening of the Conference.	188
133 SIR E. HOWARD Washington No. 2386	Dec. 27 1929	Transmits a copy of memorandum of conversation between the chairman of the American delegation and the chairman of the Japanese delegation.	189
134 To LORD TYRRELL Paris No. 70	Jan. 8 1930	Conversation with M. de Fleuriau on the Spanish representations with regard to the Mediterranean question.	194
135 SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 2	Jan. 10	Reports breaking off of Franco-Italian conversations owing to French refusal of Italian demand for parity.	195

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
136 To French Ambassador	Jan. 10	Memorandum setting out the views of H.M.G. on the questions raised by the French Government in No. 123.	195
137 LORD TYRRELL Paris	Jan. 11	Note of conversation between Mr. Henderson and M. Briand in Paris.	198
138 LORD TYRRELL Paris Tel. No. 8	Jan. 15	Reports details of French reply of January 3 to the Italian memorandum of December 21 respecting the naval question.	200
139 LORD TYRRELL Paris Tel. No. 9	Jan. 15	Summarizes impressions of French policy and desiderata.	201
140 To Spanish Ambassador	Jan. 17	Gives assurances regarding objects of the Conference and states that the Mediterranean question does not appear on the agenda.	202
141 SIR H. RUMBOLD Berlin No. 67	Jan. 24	Reports attitude of the German Government towards the Conference.	203

### CHAPTER III

#### The London Naval Conference, January 21-April 22, 1930

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142	Memorandum	Feb. 7 1930	Position at the Conference of H.M.G. in the United Kingdom.	205
143	TO SIR E. HOWARD Washington Tel. No. 94	Feb. 11	Explains reason for suggestion in No. 142 with regard to tonnage limitation of smaller cruisers.	209
144	MR. CRAIGIE	Feb. 13	Record of a conversation with M. Massigli on the French figures.	209
145	Notes of Meeting	Feb. 13	Meeting of representatives of the delegations of the United States, France, and the United Kingdom.	211
146	Notes of Meeting	Feb. 14	Meeting of representatives of the delegations of the United States, France, and the United Kingdom.	218
147	Notes of Meeting	Feb. 17	Meeting of representatives of the delegations of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Japan.	227
148	MR. CRAIGIE	Feb. 19	Summary of conversations with M. Massigli, February 13-18.	233
149	MR. CRAIGIE	Feb. 19	Note of conversation with Signor Rosso on the Italian claim to parity with France.	235
150	MR. CRAIGIE	Feb. 25	Note of conversation with M. Massigli on French security.	236

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
151 M. MASSIGLI	Feb. 26	Draft of a Mediterranean Pact communicated to Mr. Craigie.	237
152 Notes of conversation	Mar. 9	Conversation between Mr. MacDonald, Mr. Henderson, and M. Briand.	238
153 Notes of conversation	Mar. 11	Conversation between Sir R. Vansittart, Signor Grandi, and Signor Bordonaro on Italo-French relations.	241
154 Notes of Meeting	Mar. 12	Meeting of representatives of the delegations of the United States, France, and the United Kingdom.	242
155 Notes of conversation	Mar. 13	Conversation between Mr. MacDonald and Signor Grandi on Franco-Italian relations.	248
156 To SIR J. TILLEY Tokyo Tel. No. 39	Mar. 15	Information with regard to proposed compromise on Japanese claims.	249
157 To SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 27	Mar. 15	Instructions to point out unofficially to Signor Mussolini the need for a more co-operative attitude on the part of Italy at the Conference.	251
158 Notes of conversation	Mar. 16	Conversation between Mr. MacDonald, Mr. Alexander, M. Briand, and M. Tardieu.	252
159 SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 39	Mar. 16	Explains difficulties in the way of acting on instructions in No. 157.	257
160 SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 41	Mar. 18	Further comment on the question of an approach to Signor Mussolini.	258
161 SIR J. TILLEY Tokyo Tel. No. 80	Mar. 18	Reports interview with Japanese Foreign Minister on proposed compromise with regard to Japanese claim.	258
162 SIR H. RUMBOLD Berlin Tel. No. 47	Mar. 18	Reports interview with German Secretary of State on rumours of concessions to the French in the matter of trained reserves.	260
163 To SIR J. TILLEY Tokyo Tel. No. 42	Mar. 19	Approves Sir J. Tilley's language to Foreign Minister and suggests that he should see Japanese Prime Minister.	261
164 MR. R. I. CAMPBELL Washington Tel. No. 136	Mar. 19	Reports discussion with Under-Secretary of State on improved prospects for an Anglo-Japanese-American agreement and on probable attitude of American public towards a tripartite agreement.	262
165 SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 45	Mar. 20	Reports that press comment has ruined the chance of a successful approach to Signor Mussolini.	263
166 SIR J. TILLEY Tokyo Tel. No. 88	Mar. 21	Reports conversations with American Ambassador in Tokyo and with Japanese Foreign Minister.	264

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167	SIR J. TILLEY Tokyo Tel. No. 91	Mar. 22	Alleged Franco-Japanese intrigues about submarines.	265
168	Notes of Meeting	Mar. 24	Meeting of representatives of the delegations of the United States and the United Kingdom.	266
169	Notes of conversation	Mar. 24	Conversation between Mr. MacDonald and Signor Grandi.	274
170	Notes of conversation	Mar. 27	Conversation between Mr. Henderson and M. Briand.	276
171	SIR J. TILLEY Tokyo Tel. No. 96	Mar. 27	Reports that Japanese answer will be delayed.	279
172	Letter from the Spanish Ambassador	Mar. 31	States Spanish claim to participation in any discussion of the Mediterranean question.	280
173	SIR J. TILLEY Tokyo Tel. No. 102	Apr. 1	Reports probability that Japanese will make only minor reservations.	280
174	MR. CRAIGIE	Apr. 1	Note of conversation with M. Massigli on the French figures.	281
175	Notes of Meeting	Apr. 2	Meeting of representatives of the delegates of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Japan.	282
176	Notes of conversations	Apr. 3-4	Conversation between Mr. MacDonald, Mr. Henderson, and Signor Grandi, April 3. Note by Mr. Craigie of a conversation with Signor Rosso, April 4.	289
177	SIR R. LINDSAY Washington Tel. No. 156	Apr. 3	Reports conversation with Acting Secretary of State.	291
178	To Spanish Ambassador	Apr. 4	Repeats assurance to the Spanish Government that no decisions would be reached on the Mediterranean question without full consultation with all the Mediterranean Powers concerned.	292
179	SIR J. TILLEY Tokyo Tel. No. 108	Apr. 5	Reports Japanese opinion on compromise.	292
180	SIR J. TILLEY Tokyo Tel. No. 109	Apr. 5	Further report on Japanese opinion.	293
181	Notes of Meeting	Apr. 8	Meeting of representatives of the delegations of France and the United Kingdom. Draft Declaration.	293
182	Notes of Meeting	Apr. 9	Meeting of representatives of the delegations of France and the United Kingdom.	302

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
183 Notes of Meeting	Apr. 10	Meeting of representatives of the delegations of France and the United Kingdom.	306
184 Notes of Meeting	Apr. 10	Meeting of representatives of the delegations of France, the United Kingdom, and Italy.	309

#### CHAPTER IV

### Attitude of His Majesty's Government towards M. Briand's proposal for European Federal Union (May–September, 1930)

INTRODUCTORY NOTE	.	.	.	.	.	.	312
185 Notes of conversation	May 9 1930	Conversation between Mr. Henderson and M. Briand in Paris on the latter's proposal.					313
186 Memorandum	May 1	Memorandum by M. Briand on the organization of a system of European federal union.					314
187 SIR E. PHIPPS Vienna Tel. No. 53	May 26	Reports views of the Austrian Chancellor on M. Briand's proposals.					324
188 SIR H. RUMBOLD Berlin No. 434	May 28	Reports interviews with Dr. Brüning and Herr von Schubert on M. Briand's proposal.					324
189 Foreign Office Memorandum	May 30	Memorandum on M. Briand's proposals: European press comments on the proposal.					326
190 SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 99	May 30	Reports Italian refusal to accept the proposal					333
191 SIR H. RUMBOLD Berlin No. 468	June 13	Reports Herr von Schubert's views on the proposal.					334
192 MR. NEWTON Berlin No. 588	July 16	Reports Herr von Bülow's comments on the German reply to the proposal.					335
193 Foreign Office Memorandum	July 3	Memorandum on M. Briand's proposal.					336
194 To M. DE FLEURIAU	July 16	Transmits reply of H.M.G. in the United Kingdom to M. Briand's memorandum.					345
195 Foreign Office Memorandum	Aug. 22	Summary of replies of Governments to M. Briand's memorandum.					348
196 MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 45	Sept. 9	Transmits Mr. Cadogan's report on the discussion of M. Briand's proposal by delegates of European States members of the League.					351
197 Resolution of the Assembly of the League of Nations	Sept. 17	Resolution of the Assembly setting up a Commission to consider M. Briand's proposal.					352

## CHAPTER V

Negotiations with the French and Italian Governments with a view to facilitating a Franco-Italian Naval Agreement (from the adjournment of the London Naval Conference on April 22, 1930, to the publication of the 'Bases of Agreement' on March 11, 1931)

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
INTRODUCTORY NOTE	.	.	354
198 SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 75	May 3	Transmits message for Mr. MacDonald from Signor Grandi on Italian naval programme.	354
199 To SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 51	May 7	Transmits message for Signor Grandi from Mr. MacDonald.	355
200 To SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 52	May 7	Comments on the size of the Italian building programme.	355
201 To SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 53	May 7	Message from Sir R. Vansittart explaining why Mr. MacDonald approached Signor Grandi as Chairman of the Conference rather than as Prime Minister.	356
202 SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 82	May 10	Reports delivery to Signor Grandi of Mr. MacDonald's message.	357
203 SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 83	May 10	Reports that Signor Grandi expressed his great desire to come to an agreement with France.	357
204 Notes of conversation	May 9	Conversation between Mr. Henderson and M. Briand in Paris on Franco-Italian relations.	358
205 To SIR R. GRAHAM Rome No. 604	May 27	Reports Mr. Henderson's conversation with Signor Grandi at Geneva.	358
206 Notes of conversation	May 14	Conversation between Mr. Henderson, M. Briand, and Signor Grandi at Geneva.	361
207 Notes of conversation	May 15	Conversation between Mr. Selby and Signor Rosso at Geneva.	363
208 SIR R. GRAHAM Rome No. 349	May 16	Further account of the conversation with Signor Grandi (Nos. 202-3), with regard to Mr. MacDonald's message: text of Signor Grandi's reply.	364
209 To LORD TYRRELL Paris No. 1087	May 23	Question of postponement of the French and Italian naval programmes.	367
210 SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 96	May 28	Reports conversation with Signor Grandi on Signor Mussolini's bellicose speeches: asks on behalf of Signor Grandi whether Mr. MacDonald would agree to alteration in the text of his message (No. 199).	368

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
211	To SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 63	May 29	Mr. MacDonald's comment on Signor Grandi's request.	370
212	To SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 64	May 30	Mr. MacDonald's decision not to alter the text of his message.	370
213	SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 98	May 31	Reports Signor Grandi's decision not to quote Mr. MacDonald's message.	370
214	SIR R. GRAHAM Rome No. 384	May 30	Reports conversation with Signor Grandi on statements in French press regarding alleged Italian landing in Albania.	371
215	LORD TYRRELL Paris No. 589	May 31	Reports effect in France of Signor Mussolini's aggressive speeches.	371
216	To SIR R. GRAHAM Rome No. 650	June 13	Transmits copy of despatch to Lord Tyrrell containing an account of conversation between Sir R. Vansittart and M. de Fleuriau, and asking for more information about Franco-Italian conversations.	372
217	To LORD TYRRELL Paris No. 1242	June 16	Transmits copy of a memorandum from the French Government regarding incidents at Bari.	374
218	LORD TYRRELL Paris No. 671	June 17	Reports conversation with M. Briand on Franco-Italian relations and the impossibility of negotiating in the atmosphere produced by incidents such as those at Bari.	375
219	SIR R. GRAHAM Rome No. 439	June 20	Reports that Signor Grandi attributes lack of progress in the conversations to the French attitude.	376
220	SIR R. GRAHAM Rome No. 454	June 25	Reports conversation between the French Ambassador in Rome and Signor Grandi.	377
221	SIR R. GRAHAM Rome No. 464	June 27	Reports conversation with Signor Mussolini on Franco-Italian relations.	378
222	SIR R. GRAHAM Rome No. 465	June 27	Reports representations to Signor Mussolini and Signor Grandi on the unfriendly attitude of the Italian press towards Great Britain.	382
223	SIR R. GRAHAM Rome No. 473	June 28	Transmits copy of instructions sent to the Italian Ambassador in Paris regarding the suspension of French and Italian naval building programmes during the negotiations between the two countries.	383
224	To M. BRIAND and SIGNOR GRANDI	July 2	Letter from Mr Henderson suggesting the suspension of the French and Italian programmes until the meeting of the Preparatory Commission of the Disarmament Conference.	385

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
225 M. BRIAND	July 9	Letter to Mr. Henderson explaining the position between France and Italy, and stating the decision of the French Government to lay down no new ships during the current year.	386
226 To LORD TYRRELL Paris Tel. No. 66	July 10	Instructions to congratulate M. Briand on the above decision and on the completion of the evacuation of the Rhineland.	389
227 LORD TYRRELL Paris	July 11	Reports carrying out instructions in No. 226.	389
228 SIGNOR BORDANARO	July 12	Transmits copies of Franco-Italian correspondence regarding suspension of building programmes.	390
229 SIGNOR GRANDI	July 13	Suspension of the laying down of ships: Franco-Italian political questions.	392
230 To M. BRIAND	July 15	Expression of Mr. Henderson's pleasure at the decision to suspend building programmes.	393
231 LORD TYRRELL Paris No. 808	July 15	Reports M. Dumesnil's interpretation of the undertaking in regard to new construction.	393
232 SIR R. VANSITTART	Aug. 6	Note for Mr. MacDonald on the Franco-Italian negotiations: proposed naval and political conversations to proceed concurrently.	394
233 MR. R. H. CAMPBELL Paris No. 1039	Sept. 16	Summary of Franco-Italian naval conversations in which M. Massigli and Signor Rosso failed to agree on a formula.	396
234 MR. CRAIGIE	Sept. 20	Memorandum of conversation with M. Massigli on the Franco-Italian difficulties over parity.	399
235 To LORD TYRRELL Paris No. 2025	Oct. 1	Conversation between Mr. Henderson, M. Briand, and M. Massigli on the position of the negotiations between France and Italy.	400
236 To SIR R. GRAHAM Rome No. 1081	Oct. 1	Statement by Mr. Henderson to Signor Scialoja on the importance of an agreement between France and Italy before the meeting of the Preparatory Commission.	402
237 SIR R. GRAHAM Rome No. 724	Oct. 1	Reports conversations with Signor Grandi and with the French Ambassador on the breakdown in the naval negotiations.	403
238 SIR R. LINDSAY Washington Tel. No. 343	Oct. 15	Reports proposals by Mr. Gibson and Mr. Marriner to bring pressure to bear on the French and Italian Governments to reach agreement.	404
239 To SIR R. LINDSAY Washington Tel. No. 520	Oct. 17	Reply to No. 238 to the effect that H.M.G. were consulting with Japanese Government.	406



NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
240 To SIR J. TILLEY Tokyo Tel. No. 125	Oct. 18	Information about American proposal for similar representations by the three Naval Powers.	407
241 To SIR R. LINDSAY Washington Tel. No. 528	Oct. 22	Suggests that concerted action might do more harm than good, and that there was no evidence that the French intended to extend their building programme.	407
242 To SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 122.	Oct. 23	Repeats views of H.M.G. as in No. 241.	408
243 To MR SNOW Tokyo Tel. No. 128	Oct. 23	Repeats views of H.M.G. as in No. 241.	409
244 SIR R. LINDSAY Washington Tel. No. 360	Oct. 23	Reports that U.S. Government still desire that H.M.G. should make <i>démarche</i> at Paris and Rome.	409
245 MR. CRAIGIE	Oct. 24	Conversation with Mr. Atherton who said that his Government regretted that H.M.G. did not agree with their view of the position.	410
246 SIR R. LINDSAY Washington Tel. No. 362	Oct. 24	Reports conversation with Mr. Stimson on the question of the French programme.	411
247 SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 174	Oct. 24	Reports suggestion by Signor Grandi that the French and Italian Governments might be asked to prolong their naval holiday.	412
248 To LORD TYRRELL Paris Tels. Nos. 118, 119, 200 and to SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tels. Nos. 125-7	Oct. 25	Instructions to represent to the French and Italian Governments the importance of resuming their conversations and endeavouring to reach agreement.	412
249 To SIR R. LINDSAY Washington Tel. No. 544	Oct. 25	Mr. Stimson to be informed of action taken at Paris and Rome.	413
250 SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 177	Oct. 27	Reports intention of Signor Grandi to make an approach to M. Briand.	414
251 LORD TYRRELL Paris Tel. No. 179	Oct. 28	Reports statement by M. Massigli that declaration of the Fascist Grand Council insisting on the principle of parity debarred the French Government from further advances.	414
252 LORD TYRRELL Paris Unnumbered	Oct. 28	Reports information from Mr. Gibson that the French Government would accept suggestion in No. 238.	415
253 LORD TYRRELL Paris	Oct. 28	Letter to Sir R. Vansittart giving an account of a conversation with M. Berthelot.	416
254 LORD TYRRELL Paris Tel. No. 180	Oct. 29	Reports M. Briand's willingness to resume conversations if the Italians left in abeyance their claim to parity.	416

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
255 LORD TYRRELL Paris	Oct. 30	Letter to Sir R. Vansittart giving an account of a conversation with M. Loucheur on the desirability of an Anglo-French Naval agreement, to which Italy might accede.	417
256 LORD TYRRELL Paris Tel. No. 183	Oct. 31	Reports information from U.S. Chargé d'Affaires about Mr. Gibson's interview with Signor Grandi in Rome.	418
257 SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tels. Nos. 180-1	Nov. 1	Reports that Signor Grandi was not favourably impressed with Mr. Gibson's proposals: French and Italians have agreed to resume conversations at Geneva.	418
258 SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 182	Nov. 1	Reports Mr. Gibson's interview with Signor Mussolini; no allusion was made to the Franco-Italian conversations.	419
259 SIR R. LINDSAY Washington Tel. No. 370	Nov. 3	Reports progress of Mr. Gibson's mission.	420
260 LORD TYRRELL Paris	Nov. 3	Letter to Sir R. Vansittart suggesting that moment was favourable for an agreement.	421
261 TO SIR R. LINDSAY Washington Tel. No. 565	Nov. 4	Instructions to convey thanks of H.M.G. to Mr. Stimson for his action and for information respecting Mr. Gibson's activities.	422
262 TO LORD TYRRELL Paris Tels. Nos. 127-8	Nov. 4	Message from Sir R. Vansittart regarding (i) French and British naval ratios and possibility of agreement, (ii) participation in proposed Franco-Italian discussions at Geneva.	422
263 SIR R. LINDSAY Washington Tel. No. 373	Nov. 4	Reports information about Mr. Gibson's conversations in Rome.	424
264 SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 185	Nov. 4	Reports information about Mr. Gibson's conversations in Rome.	424
265 TO SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 136	Nov. 6	Account of Mr. Craigie's interview with the Italian Ambassador on October 31.	425
266 LORD TYRRELL Paris Tel. No. 188	Nov. 6	Reports conversation with M. Berthelot regarding the forthcoming conversations at Geneva.	426
267 TO SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 137	Nov. 7	British participation in Franco-Italian conversations at Geneva.	426
268 TO SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 139	Nov. 7	Account of position with regard to forthcoming Anglo-French and Anglo-Franco-Italian negotiations at Geneva.	427
269 SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 191	Nov. 7	Reports that Italian Government welcome British participation in the negotiations at Geneva.	428

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270	SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 193	Nov. 8	Considers that Italian Government should be informed at an early stage of the proposed Anglo-French conversations.	428
271	MR. CRAIGIE	Jan. 1 1931	Memorandum on his conversations at Geneva, Rome, and Paris.	428
272	TO LORD TYRRELL Paris Tel. No. 153 and to SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 158	Dec. 16 1930	Suggests prolongation of the Franco-Italian building truce.	446
273	LORD TYRRELL Paris Tel. No. 214	Dec. 17	Considers there would be no advantage in making representations to the French Government for prolongation of building truce.	447
274	SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 231	Dec. 17	Considers proposal to prolong building truce would not be resented in Italy.	447
275	TO MR. OSBORNE Rome No. 1400	Dec. 17	Italian Ambassador's views on the naval negotiations.	447
276	SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 232	Dec. 18	Message from Mr. Craigie with regard to building truce.	448
277	LORD TYRRELL Paris Tel. No. 217	Dec. 19	Confirms opinion expressed in No. 273	449
278	TO LORD TYRRELL Paris No. 155	Dec. 19	Instructions not to make representations with regard to building truce.	449
279	LORD TYRRELL Paris No. 33	Jan. 13 1931	Reports conversation with M. Berthelot on Franco-Italian relations.	450
280	GENERAL DAWES	Feb. 5	Memorandum to Sir R. Vansittart reporting instructions to American Ambassador in Paris.	451
281	TO SIR R. GRAHAM Rome No. 147	Feb. 6	Conversations with Signor Grandi and M. Briand on the naval negotiations.	451
282	LORD TYRRELL Paris Tel. No. 25	Feb. 20	Transmits message from Mr. Craigie reporting a conversation with M. Massigli.	451
283	LORD TYRRELL Paris Tel. No. 26	Feb. 20	Reports interview with M. Briand, and urges importance of co-operation with him.	451
284	M. BRIAND	Feb. 21	Letter to Mr. Henderson on the British attitude towards the proposed agreement.	45
285	LORD TYRRELL Paris No. 28	Feb. 24	Reports message from Mr. Henderson about provisional agreement reached in Paris.	45

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287	SIR R. LINDSAY Washington Tel. No. 135	Feb. 26	Transmits memorandum from Mr. Stimson on provisional agreement.	460
288	MR. SNOW Tokyo Tel. No. 27	Feb. 27	Reports Japanese view of agreement.	461
289	TO SIR R. LINDSAY Washington Nos. 128 and 129	Feb. 27	Explains reasons why French Government wish for a tonnage of 181,000 in capital ships.	461
290	SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 34	Feb. 28	Reports message from Mr. Henderson to Sir R. Lindsay in reply to Nos. 286-7.	462
291	SIR R. GRAHAM Rome No. 37	Feb. 28	Transmits message from Mr. Henderson to Mr. MacDonald that agreement in principle has been reached with the Italian Government.	463
292	MR. SNOW Tokyo No. 32	Feb. 28	Reports delay in statement of view by Japanese Government.	463
293	SIR R. LINDSAY Washington Tel. No. 147	Mar. 2	Reports message from Mr. Stimson about rumour with regard to naval agreement.	464
294	TO LORD TYRRELL Paris Tel. No. 33 and SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 47	Mar. 3	Reports message from Mr. MacDonald to M. Laval and Signor Mussolini.	464
295	TO SIR R. LINDSAY Washington Tel. No. 139 and MR. SNOW Tokyo Tel. No. 28	Mar. 4	Instructions to communicate text of 'Bases of Agreement' between French and Italian Governments and comments of H.M.G. on agreement.	465
296	SIR R. GRAHAM Rome Tel. No. 43	Mar. 6	Reports conversation with Signor Grandi on desirability of further Franco-Italian negotiations on outstanding questions.	466
297	SIR R. LINDSAY Washington Tel. No. 163	Mar. 6	Transmits message from Mr. Stimson in reply to No. 295.	466
298	TO SIR R. LINDSAY Washington No. 169	Mar. 10	Reply to message in No. 297.	468
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## CHAPTER VI

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302	LORD TYRRELL Paris No. 466	Apr. 30	Replics to No. 301.	476
303	SIR H. RUMBOLD Berlin No. 347	May 2	Comments on importance of completing the evacuation of the Rhineland by agreed date.	477
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305	H.M. MILITARY ATTACHÉ Berlin	May 8	Reports Colonel Kühlenthal's account of the National Socialist Movement.	478
306	LORD TYRRELL Paris No. 761	July 3	Transmits telegram from M. Briand to French representative on Rhineland High Commission regarding evacuation of Rhineland.	479
307	SIR H. RUMBOLD Berlin No. 543	July 3	Discusses German press comments and presidential manifesto on evacuation of Rhineland.	480
308	SIR H. RUMBOLD Berlin No. 545	July 3	Discusses effect of Rhineland evacuation on German public opinion and transmits presidential manifesto.	485
309	SIR H. RUMBOLD Berlin No. 546	July 3	Reports conversation with Dr. Curtius on Saar negotiations.	488
310	SIR H. RUMBOLD Berlin No. 547	July 3	Reports conversation with Dr. Curtius on the German financial situation.	490
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315 SIR H. RUMBOLD Berlin Tel. No. 98	Aug. 15	Reports Polish protest regarding Herr Treviranus's speech.	496
316 SIR H. RUMBOLD Berlin No. 674	Aug. 15	Reports German official statement and press comments on Polish protest.	497
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329 SIR H. RUMBOLD Berlin No. 851	Oct. 23	Discusses German political situation.	519
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340	SIR H. RUMBOLD Berlin No. 988	Dec. 10	Reports carrying out instructions in No. 338 and reply of Dr. Curtius.	540
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342	TO SIR H. RUMBOLD	Dec. 20	Letter from Sir R. Vansittart with regard to influence of the building of German 'pocket battleships' on the French plans of naval construction: inquiry about German naval plans.	543
343	SIR H. RUMBOLD	Jan. 2 1931	Letter to Sir R. Vansittart enclosing memorandum from Naval Attaché in reply to questions asked in No. 342.	545
344	SIR H. RUMBOLD Berlin No. 11	Jan. 5	Comments on German political situation.	548
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347	MR. A. HENDERSON Geneva No. 1	Jan. 17	Transmits record of conversation with Dr. Curtius.	552
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351	SIR H. RUMBOLD Berlin No. 133	Feb. 24	Reports carrying out instructions in No. 348.	561
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353	SIR H. RUMBOLD Berlin No. 158	Mar. 4	Replies to questions in No. 350 with regard to the position of Dr. Brüning's administration.	573
354	SIR H. RUMBOLD Berlin	Mar. 6	Letter to Mr. Henderson suggesting an invitation to Dr. Brüning to visit England.	579
355	SIR H. RUMBOLD Berlin No. 194	Mar. 18	Reports conversation with Dr. Curtius on the invitation to Dr. Brüning and himself to visit England.	581
356	SIR H. RUMBOLD Berlin No. 195	Mar. 18	Reports further conversation with Dr. Curtius on the question of disarmament.	583
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## CHAPTER I

# Anglo-American Discussions preparatory to the London Naval Conference (May 23–October 5, 1929)

### *INTRODUCTORY NOTE*

THE following extracts from a Foreign Office Memorandum of June 10, 1929, explain the sequence of events leading to the opening of conversations between His Majesty's Government and the United States Government on the question of naval armaments:

'The refusal of the United States Government to accept the Anglo-French compromise proposals<sup>1</sup> as a basis for further negotiations was communicated to His Majesty's Government on September 28, 1928. The similar decision of the Italian Government was communicated on October 6. From that moment there could be no further question of proceeding on the basis of the Anglo-French proposals.

'The question then arose whether, and if so at what moment, [the limitation of naval armaments] should form the subject of direct negotiations between His Majesty's Government and the United States Government. The view had been consistently maintained by this Department that the road to naval disarmament lay through an agreement with the United States and the desirability of early conversations with the United States Government was again urged after the failure of the Anglo-French compromise. But there were many difficulties in the way: the American presidential election was to take place in November; Congress was to meet in December, and at any time thereafter the Senate might commence its debates on the naval construction bill which had already been passed by the House; any naval discussion before or during the debates upon the cruiser question in the United States Congress might be interpreted as an attempt to interfere with the passage of this legislation; a new American Administration was due to come into office in March, Mr. Coolidge having definitely declared his intention to resign; on November 11 Mr. Coolidge delivered his Armistice Day speech which offered little encouragement to the opening of negotiations during his concluding term of office. It was accordingly decided by the Cabinet that no initiative should be taken by His Majesty's Government until the new President assumed office and our own General Election had taken place.

'On April 15 the meeting of the Preparatory Commission took place at Geneva. So far as naval disarmament was concerned the objective of the British delegation was to prevent if possible any public discussions from

<sup>1</sup> For an account of these proposals see Cmd. Paper 3211.

taking place which might revive old controversies before there had been time for confidential discussions between the British and American Governments with a view to discovering a basis of agreement between the two principal naval Powers. The British delegation remained in the closest touch with the American delegation throughout the proceedings of the Conference and found ready co-operation from their American colleagues in pursuing this policy. On April 22 Mr. Gibson,<sup>1</sup> the American delegate, made a general declaration explaining the American attitude on the naval question which scrupulously avoided touching on former controversies. The most important part of Mr. Gibson's speech is contained in the three following paragraphs:

“During the Third Session of the Preparatory Commission, the French Delegation brought forward a method which was an attempt to combine its original total tonnage proposals with the method of tonnage by categories. Under this method, a total tonnage was assigned to each nation and this total divided among categories of ships by specified tonnages. If I am not mistaken, certain modifications were suggested in informal discussions, so as to provide that the tonnage allocated to any given category might be increased by a certain percentage to be agreed upon, such increase to be transferred from any other category or categories not already fixed by existing treaty.

“In the hope of facilitating general agreement as to naval armaments, my Government is disposed to accept the French proposal as a basis of discussion. It is, of course, the understanding of my Government that this involves an agreement on the method alone and not upon any quantitative tonnages or the actual percentages to be transferred from one category to another. All quantitative proposals of any kind should properly be reserved for discussion by a final conference.

“My Government is disposed to give full and friendly consideration to any supplementary methods of limitation which may be calculated to make our proposals, the French thesis, or any other acceptable to other Powers and, if such a course appears desirable, my Government will be prepared to give consideration to a method of estimating equivalent naval values which takes account of other factors than displacement tonnage alone. In order to arrive at a basis of comparison in the case of categories in which there are marked variations as to unit characteristics, it might be desirable in arriving at a formula for estimating equivalent tonnage to consider certain factors which produce these variations, such as age, unit displacement, and calibre of guns. My Government has given careful consideration to various methods of comparison and the American Delegation will be in a position to discuss the subject whenever it comes before the Commission.”

The French proposal to which Mr. Gibson referred was one for the division of ships into four categories of fighting craft, namely capital ships, aircraft carriers, vessels under ten thousand tons and submarines, and a further division was made between vessels employed for home defence and vessels employed in defence of overseas territories. The original proposal

<sup>1</sup> United States Ambassador to Belgium.

contained a provision to the effect that each of the Contracting Parties could, while keeping within the limits of total tonnage to be agreed upon, make such alterations in the above-mentioned divisions as it might deem necessary for its security. As Mr. Gibson explained in his speech, this provision was subsequently modified in the course of informal discussions to one permitting the transfer from one category to another of a percentage of tonnage to be agreed upon.

The French proposal had been rejected by both the British and American delegations at the time it was first made in April 1927. That the United States Government were prepared to reconsider their rejection of this proposal we knew from their note of September 28 respecting the Anglo-French compromise, but up to the time of Mr. Gibson's speech His Majesty's Government had not seen their way to modify their attitude in regard to it.

Mr. Gibson's speech as a whole and in particular the new proposal for estimating equivalent naval values constituted a most valuable contribution to the cause of naval disarmament, and Lord Cushendun, who rose immediately Mr. Gibson sat down, was able to give the policy outlined in the speech a very warm welcome, while reserving any comment on points of detail until he had been able to consult his Government.

The Commission finally adjourned without entering upon any detailed discussion either of the naval problem as a whole or of the new American proposals, thus leaving the field clear for preliminary negotiations between the principal naval Powers. Considerable suspicion was noticeable amongst members of the French, Japanese and Italian delegations that any Anglo-American negotiations might result in a *fait accompli* which the other Powers would be bound to accept or reject; but, so far as it was possible to judge, both the British and American delegations were successful in assuring their colleagues that nothing of this kind was in contemplation. It was impressed on the other delegations that while Anglo-American conversations of some sort would clearly be an essential element in the future negotiations, the other naval Powers need have no fear of a "take it or leave it" attitude being adopted either by Great Britain or the United States.

During the Conference, [as a result of] private and confidential conversations with Mr. Gibson, it was clear that Mr. Hoover desired to take full account of the British need for a larger number of small cruisers and that his new proposals for estimating equivalent naval values had been made for this express purpose. Mr. Gibson said that Mr. Hoover was most anxious to work closely with Great Britain, and felt the conclusion of a naval agreement was the first prerequisite of such co-operation.

On May 1st, while the Commission was still in session, Sir Esmé Howard was instructed to make a communication in the following sense to the United States Government:

"His Majesty's Government have, as you are aware, warmly welcomed the public declaration made by Mr. Gibson at Geneva in regard to naval armaments. They have been equally favourably impressed by such indications as Mr. Gibson has given privately and unofficially of the President's

purpose and mind. Basing themselves on those declarations both public and confidential His Majesty's Government are confident that as between our two countries a settlement could be found of the difficulty which has hitherto divided us; that is to say that the United States and Great Britain could find a standard of parity which allowed sufficient latitude to meet the special needs of each.

“It is obviously more difficult to lay down rules which shall be equally applicable for all navies but they would not despair of reaching agreement with the other great naval Powers if once the broad lines of agreement had been fixed for the naval forces of Great Britain and the United States.

“His Majesty's Government do not know how far it is the intention of the United States Government to carry the discussion at the present session of the Preparatory Committee but they would view with great anxiety the possible consequences of publicly presenting the new proposals in any detail before there has been time and opportunity for a private and confidential exchange of views. His Majesty's Government would be glad to know from the United States Government whether they would desire that His Majesty's Government should work out independently the weight to be given to the various factors on the basis suggested by Mr. Gibson or whether, as His Majesty's Government are disposed to think the speedier and more practical plan, the United States Government would be willing to furnish confidentially to His Majesty's Government their own calculations for the consideration of His Majesty's Government. In either event His Majesty's Government earnestly hope that the United States Government will agree with His Majesty's Government in thinking it desirable that there should be no publication of any figures until there had been a confidential discussion between the two Governments; in that case His Majesty's Government would suggest that such a discussion might usefully be undertaken immediately after the general election at the end of this month and that it should take place in the first instance through diplomatic channels.

“Please make a communication to the above effect without delay to Mr. Stimson.”

Sir Esmé Howard carried out these instructions on May 3. Mr. Stimson replied that his Government were quite in agreement with the view of His Majesty's Government as regards the expediency of avoiding all public discussion of the details of the new proposals before the two Governments had been enabled by private discussions to reach agreement with regard to them. As regards the question whether the British naval authorities should work out their own calculations independently or whether the United States Government should first communicate theirs to His Majesty's Government confidentially, the Secretary of State said he must confer with the President before replying.<sup>1</sup>

No further official communication was received on the subject from the United States Government during May 1929, but Mr. Atherton<sup>1</sup> informed

<sup>1</sup> Counsellor, and at this time Chargé d'affaires at the United States Embassy in London.

the Foreign Office confidentially that no move was likely to be made by his Government until the arrival in London of General Dawes as Ambassador. General Dawes reached London on June 14, 1929.

## No. 1

*Sir E. Howard (Washington) to Sir A. Chamberlain (Received June 4)*

*No. 981 [A 3693/30/45]*

Sir,

WASHINGTON, May 23, 1929

Having seen in the Press this morning that the President was much satisfied with the report Admiral Hilary Jones had made to him during an interview yesterday regarding the reception at Geneva of the American naval disarmament proposals, I asked the Secretary of State today if he could confirm this. The Secretary of State said that he had not seen the President since his interview with the Admiral, but that he had no reason to believe that the President was other than well satisfied with the results of the Geneva discussions.

2. Colonel Stimson went on to say that for the moment of course there was nothing to be done but to mark time until the elections in Great Britain were over. He asked me what news there was as to the prospects of the result of the elections. I said I could not tell him anything he did not know already, but the general impression seemed to be that the result was more than usually doubtful.

3. In any case I ventured to think that whatever Government might be in power in Great Britain after the elections the attitude towards the new American proposals regarding naval disarmament would be equally sympathetic. There could be no mistaking the popular welcome that had been given to them nor the hope so generally expressed that, by their means, a way might be found to put an end to a period of tension which was clearly thoroughly distasteful to the majority of people in Great Britain.

4. Colonel Stimson said he could say the same of this country and he had no doubt that when we came to discuss the question again we should find the United States quite ready to meet us halfway.

I have etc.

ESMÉ HOWARD

## No. 2

*Mr. A. Henderson<sup>1</sup> to Sir J. Tilley (Tokyo)*

*No. 275 [A 3943/30/45]*

Sir,

FOREIGN OFFICE, June 18, 1929

The Japanese Ambassador called on the 12th inst. and asked Sir Ronald Lindsay<sup>2</sup> if he could give him any information as to the course which

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Arthur Henderson succeeded Sir A. Chamberlain as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on June 8, 1929.

<sup>2</sup> Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

negotiations with the United States Government over naval disarmament were likely to follow.

2. Sir R. Lindsay stated that as His Majesty's Ministers had only just taken office, it was not possible to give the Ambassador any definite information on this point, but he felt able to repeat to His Excellency the assurances already given by the late Secretary of State that there would be no intention on the part of His Majesty's Government to exclude Japan and other naval Powers from the discussions or to reach a definite agreement in any way behind their backs.

3. In reply to a direct question Sir R. Lindsay declared that His Majesty's Government had not received from the United States Government their proposals as to a formula for measuring the tonnage of fleets. The recent meeting at Geneva had carried matters to a certain point and had then left them in a somewhat indefinite position, and it rested with one party or the other to take the initiative again. His Majesty's Government were at present awaiting the arrival of the new American Ambassador and hoped that this might possibly give an impulse to discussions.

4. His Excellency enquired if anything could be said with regard to the reported journey of the Prime Minister to the United States. In reply Sir R. Lindsay referred the Ambassador to a statement in 'The Times' of June 12th to the effect that a visit to the United States had been contemplated by the late Prime Minister but added that he was unable to state whether or not Mr. MacDonald had definitely decided to take any action in this sense.

I am, etc.

A. HENDERSON

### No. 3

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir E. Howard (Washington)*

*No. 946 [A 4117/30/45]*

Sir,

FOREIGN OFFICE, June 24, 1929

I have to inform your Excellency that the Prime Minister met General Dawes at Forbes on Sunday, the 16th June, and took him to Logie House to lunch; afterwards, conversations took place regarding the naval situation.<sup>1</sup> It was agreed that the conversations were to be informal and general, but they were, if possible, to indicate the lines upon which negotiations were to be conducted.

2. The Prime Minister observed, as a preliminary, that he was to take a personal interest in these negotiations because he recognised their supreme importance, not only for Great Britain and the United States of America, but for the whole world. General Dawes said that that gratified him very much and that it would also please the President. He then proceeded to tell the Prime Minister that he had had various interviews with the President before leaving, and that he would like first of all to tell the Prime Minister what he

<sup>1</sup> A summary of these conversations was telegraphed to Sir E. Howard on June 22.

proposed to say at the Pilgrims' Dinner on Tuesday. He thereupon read the speech he had prepared, and asked for any comments Mr. MacDonald would like to make.

3. The Prime Minister told General Dawes that, of course, the speech was to be the Ambassador's own, but that he would be willing to comment upon it, particularly from the point of view of its impression upon Europe. The reference to foreign States, in so far as it indicated a desire that they should not regard the negotiations as something leading to a *fait accompli* which would be presented to them in an Anglo-American agreement, might, Mr. MacDonald suggested, be made a little clearer—if that really was the intention. At General Dawes's request the Prime Minister wrote out a suggestion, which was at once accepted.

4. The Prime Minister then pointed out to General Dawes that the reference to naval officers might be misunderstood, and that it would be advisable to say something on the recognition of the duty of a naval officer to think only of the security of his nation and to do so in terms of ships and armaments. General Dawes then asked Mr. MacDonald if he would be good enough to write down his suggested wording.

5. General Dawes proceeded to discuss the order in which the various problems, all hanging upon each other, should be approached, and the Prime Minister at once threw out the hint that it might be easiest, if the President was keenly interested in a reduction of naval armaments and was preparing a scheme for the private consideration of His Majesty's Government, to leave everything else in abeyance for the moment. Much to Mr. MacDonald's satisfaction, General Dawes at once agreed, so that questions of belligerent rights, freedom of the seas, and so on, will not arise at the moment.

6. The President and his advisers are working out a formula in accordance with the Gibson declaration at Geneva, by which ships may have different valuations assigned to them, and in all probability the first problem which will have to be faced will be the settlement of what these valuations should be. This would change the problem from one of tonnage to one of points. So soon as the United States Government are prepared with their proposals on this subject, His Majesty's Government are to have their conclusions given to them in confidence so that they may exchange views, and, if possible, come to an agreement before the negotiations become official and formal. The Prime Minister emphasised the supreme need of informally clearing the ground, and General Dawes replied that that was exactly the mind of the President, and observed to Mr. MacDonald: 'Now I can see that with you and the President working together, an agreement will be come to.'

7. General Dawes raised the question of the Prime Minister's visit to America and said that the President was looking forward with great pleasure to seeing him there. Mr. MacDonald replied that the initiative had not come from himself at all, and asked General Dawes if he would discuss with him the pros and cons of such a visit. The Prime Minister found that General Dawes had been considering the matter himself, and the conclusion was reached that it would be a great mistake—and much too risky—for the Prime Minister to



go to Washington either to conduct negotiations or whilst the negotiations were still going on, but that he should certainly go as soon as agreement had been reached. A visit then would cement a good understanding and would completely revolutionise the relations between the two countries. That was exactly the Prime Minister's own view.

8. The Prime Minister returned to the danger of making this appear an Anglo-American agreement. With that General Dawes also agreed. He then requested the Prime Minister to draft the communiqué<sup>1</sup> for the press. Agreement was ultimately reached upon a form of words which, with General Dawes standing by, the Prime Minister read to the press men.

9. The interview was of the most extraordinarily cordial nature, and the Prime Minister was hardly prepared for the delightfully personal and friendly attitude of the Ambassador. General Dawes referred to the London Conference, regarding every stage of which he seemed to have been informed by Mr. Owen Young.

I am, &c.

A. HENDERSON

<sup>1</sup> This communiqué stated that General Dawes's speech of June 18 together with a speech Mr. MacDonald proposed to make on the same night were 'intended to be the beginning of the negotiations'. In his speech Mr. MacDonald announced in general terms that a visit by him to the United States was under consideration.

#### No. 4

#### *Memorandum by Mr. MacDonald of a conversation with General Dawes and Mr. Gibson*

[A 4296/30/45]

June 25, 1929

I saw General Dawes and Mr. Gibson and discussed the question of the preparations for a conference on naval disarmament. They proposed that a Conference should be held with the five Powers interested for the purpose of surveying the problems generally, to be attended by political representatives, whilst concurrently naval experts should be employed in working out schemes arising out of the proposals and agreements come to by the main conference. I asked who would call the conference. They said that they had considered that point and that they thought either Great Britain or Japan should do it. The reason for suggesting Japan was that they wished to enlist to the fullest extent the support of the Japanese Government. I pointed out that, whilst in no way objecting to Japan, there were certain matters to be considered:

- (1) Where would the Conference be held after Japan called it?
- (2) Would it not give rise to suspicions if Japan initiated such a Conference?

They said that the world expected that Great Britain should do it; that if we would agree, so would they; that as a matter of fact they thought we

should, but in that event they would urge that Japan, by the most important chairmanship or in some other way, should get a leading rôle assigned to it. To that I agreed.

We then discussed the situation generally and Mr. Gibson said that his experience at Geneva led him to consider what would be the position of America, Japan and Great Britain if other Powers rejected the sort of agreement which we might be prepared to sign, and proposed that in the event of the five-Power conference breaking down, we should have at the back of our mind an immediate setting up of a three-Power conference which would come to a really satisfactory agreement, and that that should be executed. We discussed the effect of such an idea and decided that nothing whatever should be said of it until it was clear that the five-Power conference would break down. We agreed that the proposal to go straight ahead with the three-Power conference might have an influence in getting a five-Power agreement in the last resort.

I then raised the question of Geneva and asked what Mr. Loudon, the Chairman of the Preparatory Disarmament Commission, would say to the proposal. Mr. Gibson stated that he (Mr. Loudon) had suggested such a thing and that, particularly in private with him, Mr. Loudon had said that such a conference could produce an agreement which would become at once an agreement of the Preparatory Commission, and that he would summon the Commission immediately the five-Power conference had produced results.

Both General Dawes and Mr. Gibson were most cordial in their relations to League contacts and had no intention of setting up anything rival to the Geneva commissions. They emphasised that their object was to prepare the way.

I then raised the question of where the Conference should be held and they agreed that London should be the place.

I said that I would like to sleep on the whole problem and a meeting at 6 o'clock tomorrow (Wednesday) afternoon was arranged. The three-Power conference would include Japan, United States and Great Britain.

If the five-Power conference fails (i.e. including France and Italy) then we, Japan and the United States will immediately resolve ourselves into a three-Power conference.

## No. 5

*Minute by Sir R. Lindsay on the conversation of June 25 between  
Mr. MacDonald, General Dawes, and Mr. Gibson*

[A 4296/30/45]

(1) We agree as to the desirability of a conference being held, provided that the ground has been sufficiently prepared beforehand, and provided in particular that we find ourselves in substantial agreement with the United

States Government in regard to the system for measuring the equivalent values of the various types of cruisers. Criticisms by a number of other Powers who would resent the summoning of any conference which did not call itself a sub-committee of the Preparatory Commission is to be anticipated, but this is not regarded as a serious objection to the summoning of an independent conference.

(2) We also agree that the conference should be composed of the five principal naval Powers. It should be remembered, however, that opposition to the idea of a Five-Power conference may be expected from France, which has hitherto shown anxiety to keep this question in the hands of the Preparatory Commission at Geneva. It is indeed possible that both France and Italy would refuse to come into a Five-Power conference, in the same way as they did in 1927 unless they had good reason to think that their special naval desiderata could be secured.

(3) If the Five-Power conference fails to reach agreement owing to opposition by France and Italy, while the other three Powers seem to be in substantial agreement, it seems reasonable to suppose that the Five-Power conference would resolve itself naturally into a Three-Power conference. We see no objection to this procedure, provided that at the present stage no mention whatever is made of the possibility of a Three-Power conference being held.

(4) As regards the venue for the conference, we think that Washington would be the best choice, provided that we have been able to reach a full agreement with the Americans in regard to the proposed 'yardsticks' before the invitations to the conference are issued. Any naval agreement which takes adequate account of our needs in the matter of small cruisers will inevitably meet with determined opposition by the Big Navy party in the United States. There are already signs that Mr. Hoover is not going to have it all his own way in this respect. On the assumption that we and the Americans are agreed beforehand on fundamentals, I think that we could get better terms at Washington and that there would be less difficulty of getting through the Senate an agreement which would be widely heralded as a great American achievement. I recognise, however, that owing to the number of other conferences which are to be held here, it will no doubt be exceedingly difficult for Cabinet Ministers to go so far afield as Washington. The same objection applies, but with much greater force, to Tokyo, and seems to put the idea of the summoning of a conference by Japan out of court. If, therefore, Washington should be held to be impracticable, we agree that London would be the best venue for the proposed conference.

(5) We also agree with the American suggestion that the conference should be attended by political representatives, whilst concurrently naval experts should be employed in working out schemes arising out of proposals and agreements come to by the main conference, provided that, as suggested above, the two Governments, after consultation with the naval experts, have first reached agreement in regard to the system of evaluation of naval strength; otherwise the American plan, which is apparently to exclude naval experts

from the conference room even in an advisory capacity, would contain certain obvious dangers.

(6) I have noticed a disposition in American circles to believe that provided the three principal naval Powers reach agreement, France and Italy will be bound to come into line. This view I believe to be unduly optimistic and it is well to bear in mind that, if we fail to bring the French and Italians along with us, the question of any *substantial* reduction of naval strength will become a much more difficult one.

## No. 6

*Memorandum by Mr. Craigie on a conversation with Mr. Gibson*

[A 4361/30/45]

FOREIGN OFFICE, June 26, 1929

Mr. Hugh Gibson, who is an old friend of mine and with whom I kept in close touch during the last meeting of the Preparatory Commission, came to see me to-day and referred to the naval question.

He said that he had been instructed by his Government to come to London to explain to General Dawes the position in which the work of the Preparatory Commission had been left and the relationship which the Commission's activities bore to any future discussions on the naval disarmament question. General Dawes had been instructed to ascertain what were the views of His Majesty's Government as to the next step and to make recommendations accordingly to the United States Government.

Mr. Gibson felt that there might be a certain risk in talking about anything in the nature of a formal 'conference' at the present stage. It was liable to frighten the French, who were most anxious that any discussions there might be through the diplomatic channel between the five naval Powers should be merely regarded as preparations for the resumption of the work of the Preparatory Commission. It was of course most important to get the French in to any Five-Power meeting there might be, but we should have to go very carefully if we were to avoid a repetition of the French and Italian refusal to attend the Geneva Five-Power Conference. Once we had succeeded in getting the French and Italians to meeting us round a table—it would be far better not to talk of a 'conference'—and it became clear that there was a good prospect of agreement at all events between Great Britain, the United States and Japan, it would be exceedingly difficult for the French and Italians to drop out. I interjected at this stage that if they *did* drop out it would make the question of actual *reduction* a much more difficult one, and with this he fully agreed.

Mr. Gibson felt therefore that it was important to proceed very cautiously at the present stage in order to make sure not only that there was a sufficiently good basis of agreement before the conference is actually called, but also to ensure that the French and Italians came into that conference when called.

There was, he thought, no undue hurry from the American point of view, and the number of conferences and negotiations which the new British Government had ahead of them would be a sufficient excuse for not embarking on any immediate naval conference. The important thing, from the point of view of the American Government, was not so much the immediate summoning of the conference as the possibility of being able to assure public opinion that things were proceeding in the right direction and that the necessary preparatory work was being undertaken.

As for the venue for such a conference or meeting, Mr. Gibson felt that London would probably be the best place. I reminded him that during our talks in Geneva we had rather reached the conclusion that Washington would be preferable (provided there had been sufficient preparation in advance) because (a) there would then be the possibility of direct access to Mr. Hoover, who was of course unable to leave the country, and (b) any agreement reached in Washington under the auspices of the President seemed less likely to meet with strong opposition in the Senate than one concluded elsewhere. Mr. Gibson said that he had put these same points to General Dawes, and that he (Gibson) personally thought that they were of importance. The General, however, who had an unrivalled knowledge of the Senate, felt sure that the question of the *venue* of the conference would not have any effect on the action which the Senate might take in regard to any agreement which might result from it, and he accordingly favoured London.

Mr. Gibson reminded me that he had informed me at Geneva that the American formula for estimating the equivalent values of cruiser strength was at that time ready in the President's safe at Washington. Since then the President had decided to send the 'yardstick' back to the Navy Department for certain repairs and modifications, so that it had not been ready when General Dawes left Washington. It was, however, to be sent to the General as soon as possible. Meantime, had we anyone at Washington with sufficient technical knowledge and with sufficient understanding of this question to discuss the 'yardstick' with the naval experts in Washington?

I replied that we had an excellent Naval Attaché there, but that I did not think that he had had any opportunity of following the recent negotiations or of making himself familiar with the elements which went to make up a good 'yardstick'.

In the course of further conversation it emerged that the official in the Navy Department who had had most to do with the preparation of the American 'yardstick' was an officer of the rank of Colonel in the Marines who might, possibly, be able to come to this country without attracting any attention in order to explain its merits to General Dawes and, if thought desirable, to the Prime Minister and other interested authorities here. If, by a certain amount of adjustment, the 'yardstick' could be made to fit our requirements, we should then for all practical purposes have obviated the danger of any serious Anglo-American divergence during the ensuing negotiations.

R. L. CRAIGIE

*Memorandum by Mr. Craigie on a conversation with Mr. Gibson*  
 [A 4362/30/45]

FOREIGN OFFICE, June 27, 1929

Mr. Atherton rang me up yesterday evening to ask whether I could call round at the Embassy this morning on my way to the Office in order to have a further talk with Mr. Gibson before he left London on the 11 o'clock train.

I accordingly called this morning and found that Mr. Gibson was still distinctly apprehensive about the summoning of a conference on the naval question before we knew more definitely what was to be the agenda of the conference and above all, before the ground had been more fully prepared than was the case at present. He said that he and the Ambassador had been turning over in their minds various methods of approach and that the suggestion had been made that there should be a preliminary meeting of Ambassadors in London who would pass resolutions affirming the necessity of an early settlement of the disarmament question and drawing attention to the profound influence on that question of the signature of the Kellogg Pact. This preliminary meeting would then adjourn, and the experts would proceed to endeavour to arrive at an agreement on a common 'yardstick' for estimating equivalent naval values. The third step would be the convocation of a full dress conference to be attended by the political representatives of the five Powers for the purpose of examining the work done by the experts and arriving at a final disarmament agreement. Mr. Gibson did not, however, appear to be very enamoured of this procedure and seemed to doubt whether it would appeal to his Government. He was of the same opinion as that which he expressed to me yesterday, namely that the first step should be, if possible, an understanding between the Americans and ourselves in regard to the 'yardstick'. Once the two Governments were sure that they were for all practical purposes in agreement on this point, it would then be possible to approach other Governments with a greater assurance as to the ultimate success of the negotiations. A meeting of representatives of the five Powers in London would seem to follow naturally because the whole problem was too complex to be discussed satisfactorily through the diplomatic channel. Mr. Gibson here made the interesting suggestion that it might be found, when we actually got to work, that there would be no necessity to utilise a 'yardstick' in order to achieve agreement between the two Powers as to what was to constitute 'parity'. If, for instance, His Majesty's Government were able to state confidentially to the American Government that, given a disposition on the part of the Japanese, French and Italian Governments to reduce *pari passu*, British naval strength could be reduced to such a minimum, the United States Government would then be able to reply by indicating the minimum to which they themselves would go. It would probably be found that these two minima could be taken as constituting parity between the two countries and that the 'yardstick' could be made to fit in with the result thus achieved.

General Dawes then entered the room and joined in the conversation. The

General was most anxious to press on with negotiations at an early date because he felt that the present moment was exceedingly opportune for an agreement and that we should take full advantage of the present favourable conditions. It was for this reason that he favoured the early summoning of a conference, but he seemed afterwards fully to appreciate the importance of Mr. Gibson's arguments in favour of adequate preparation in order to obviate the chance of another failure.

At this point a telegram from the American Government was brought to the Ambassador stating that the President and the Secretary of State would like further time to consider the idea of a conference which had been adumbrated in the Ambassador's telegram reporting his interview with the Prime Minister, and that they would probably have further suggestions to make. The American Government particularly deprecated any public announcement at this time of the possibility of a conference being held. This telegram was shown to me in confidence, and the Ambassador said he would convey its contents to the Prime Minister at the earliest possible moment.

Mr. Gibson, when I said good-bye, stated that he would probably be returning here before long in connexion with any further naval discussions that might take place.

R. L. CRAIGIE

#### No. 8

*Note by Mr. MacDonald on a conversation with General Dawes  
and Mr. Atherton*

[A 4450/30/45]

June 28, 1929

I saw General Dawes and Mr. Atherton today. The Ambassador read a despatch<sup>1</sup> he had received from the Secretary of State stating that he should be clear that if conversations such as we had discussed were to be entered upon without delay, they were to be preliminary and deal only with general principles (that condition was definitely stated by us in our last conversation).

The despatch went on to specify certain points which might be considered in these conversations and it was arranged that Mr. Atherton should see Sir R. Vansittart, who would make a note of the points.

I asked that I should have time to examine the points.

Mr. Atherton suggested that some naval mathematician should come from America to discuss with his like here the contents of the 'yardstick', so that both Governments might clearly understand what any 'yardstick' proposed actually meant in terms of tonnage, etc.

The Foreign Office will receive these from Sir Robert Vansittart and I shall be glad of a consultation early next week.

J. R. M.

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to telegram No. 160 from the Secretary of State to General Dawes. The text of this telegram is printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1929*, vol. i, pp. 137-9.

## No. 9

### *Note by Sir R. Vansittart of the conversation between Mr. MacDonald and General Dawes*

[A 4450/30/45]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *June 28, 1929*

General Dawes came to see the Prime Minister this afternoon: the following was the gist of the conversation.

The President of the U.S.A. and the Secretary of State do not believe that a conference for *final* and general action is feasible at present, for the following reasons.

1. This would be likely to create opposition among naval experts in other countries.
2. There must be preparation to digest technical questions. The Naval experts require time for this.
3. There must be no ground for former accusations of lack of preparation.

The U.S. Government advocate rather a *preliminary* non-technical consultation on broad questions of general policy. Parity is axiomatic, and an assurance of this as basis of discussion is desired.

If this is agreed the U.S. Government suggest consultation of representatives of five Powers.

1. To enumerate technical questions to be submitted to experts respecting methods for determining naval strengths.
2. To consider whether final conference shall consider all or only particular categories: The U.S. Government desire to cover the Washington categories and all combatant ships.
3. To consider whether reduction or limitation is the aim. The U.S. Government desire the former.
4. To consider relative strengths for Japan, France, and Italy. If agreement should be impossible with the two latter, should they be members of final conference or should it be *à trois*?

These questions being decided then a final conference could take place after an interval for consideration and preparation.

The U.S. Government favour London for preliminary consultation but the final option should rest with U.S. Government as the movement was initiated by them.

Finally, the U.S. Government emphasise the necessity of preliminary consultation for consideration of limited and agreed questions: otherwise haste will prove detrimental.

The U.S. Government are mindful that the British position *vis-à-vis* the League of Nations may have to be considered in regard to the form of invitation.



No. 10

*Sir E. Howard (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received July 9)*

*No. 1243 [A 4547/30/45]*

WASHINGTON, *June 28, 1929*

The Secretary of State told me yesterday that the President was beginning to be a little uneasy at the pace that had been set by General Dawes in the discussions over naval disarmament, especially with regard to the reports that His Majesty's Government might call an early conference of the naval Powers. These reports however, which had come from the press had since been considerably modified. Colonel Stimson continued that while the President was still most anxious that no time should be wasted, he feared that conferences without careful preliminary preparation might end in failure, which would be the worst thing that could happen. The Secretary of State said that neither the United States Navy Department nor, he believed, His Majesty's Admiralty were yet ready with their calculations for the new 'yardstick' to measure the combat strength of cruisers. The United States Government was consequently not yet prepared to perform any surgical operation on that yardstick that might be required. He supposed His Majesty's Government was in practically the same position. It was therefore clearly not the moment to begin any technical discussions which might well be left for the Preparatory Commission in September. The President however felt that the representatives of the naval Powers in London might with good purpose confer together respecting certain general principles, with regard to which there should be no great difficulty in reaching an agreement, which would prepare the way for the more difficult discussions to come later.

2. The points which among others might with advantage be dealt with in such a preliminary conference were, he thought, a confirmation of the ratios between the navies of signatory Powers established by the Washington Treaty, the question whether the reduction to be aimed at now should include all categories of war vessels or cruisers and submarines only, the question whether or not the French suggestion that signatory Powers might transfer surplus tonnage from one category to another, should be taken into consideration, and possibly one or two other points of a general nature. A preliminary agreement on these points would help matters on considerably, but it was too early yet for any conference regarding details.

3. I asked Colonel Stimson if he had telegraphed to General Dawes in this sense, and he said he had, and that it was therefore unnecessary for me to telegraph the above to you.

I have, &c.

ESMÉ HOWARD

No. 11

*Letter from Mr. A. Cadogan to M. Massigli*<sup>1</sup>

[A 4616/30/45]

My dear Massigli,

FOREIGN OFFICE, July 6, 1929

You must have seen in the press much about discussions here on naval disarmament with the new American Ambassador and with Mr. Gibson. Your Ambassador has had one or two talks on the subject at the Foreign Office, but it occurs to me that you may like me to let you know unofficially what the position is—particularly as most of what is published is in the nature of conjecture, and consequently largely inaccurate.

There is no desire to take the matter of naval disarmament out of the hands of the Preparatory Committee, and we at any rate, for our part, would wish to do nothing that might cause any embarrassment to that Committee. On the contrary, our idea is to give effect to what was understood at the last meeting, namely to achieve some result by discussion amongst the five naval Powers which would permit the resumption of the Preparatory Committee's work with a good prospect of settling the naval disarmament question.

I might add that the conversations so far as they have gone have related to questions of procedure only and there is so far no definite result to report.

Yours, etc.

A. CADOGAN

<sup>1</sup> This letter was written at the suggestion of Mr. Gibson. M. Massigli was at this time Chief of the League of Nations section at the French Foreign Office, and French representative on the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference.

No. 12

*Letter from Mr. MacDonald to General Dawes*

[A 4592/30/45]

My dear Ambassador,

10 DOWNING STREET, July 8, 1929

I have been giving a good deal of consideration to the situation which has been clarified by the talks we have had up to now, and this is what is in my mind as the result:

1. I think it would be a very useful thing if our two Governments were to announce our agreement that we are to take the Pact of Peace—the Kellogg Pact—as a vital and controlling fact in our relations and use it as the starting point in negotiations regarding disarmament.

2. We should then proceed to declare that on that basis the object of negotiations must be *reduction* in existing armaments, and that between us the relations are such that we both agree to parity.

3. We adopt the U.S. proposal that parity should be measured by an agreed 'yardstick' which enables the slightly different values in our respective national needs to be reduced to equality.

4. In order that the elements which enter into the 'yardstick' be determined, I venture to ask you to send for an officer of your Navy—or Naval Department—with the requisite knowledge to come here and be at your service and act with a similar officer whom I shall appoint, to guide both of us in agreeing as to the 'yardstick'.

5. I think it would expedite matters if your officer would take with him a proposal which your people are prepared to make as to the 'stick' in all fairness to us.

6. When we agree as to the 'stick' we can proceed as to its application, and so far as I can see, little trouble will arise about this between us. If it does, its cause has certainly not been evident to me yet.

7. Whilst this is going on between us we must keep Japan, France and Italy generally informed in ways which we can decide from time to time.

8. We should also decide when the moment had come for 1. the general conference to meet in London, 2. when I should go to Washington, and 3. when the final conference of ratification should take place.

My own view is that if you got your officer over at once, you and I would soon settle the preliminaries. The stage indicated in paragraph 6 might be that when the general conference should begin though we should know where we stand first of all.

9. We should also agree upon the wording of the invitation to be sent to the other Powers and to the scope of the discussion. I think it ought to be confined to naval matters, and that we should agree that the actual negotiations should be in the hands of politicals and that officers should be in attendance, or at call, only for expert and technical advice.

If you will let me have your views on this note we could go ahead. I feel that time is precious and should not be lost. People are expecting much from us and I am sure we can satisfy them.

I am, etc.,

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD

### No. 13

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir J. Tilley (Tokyo)*

*No. 123 Telegraphic [A 4505/30/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 9, 1929*

My telegram No. 119 (of July 3. Naval Disarmament).<sup>1</sup>

Prime Minister saw Japanese Ambassador on July 5 and assured him that the conversations with General Dawes did not signify any intention to conclude a United States-British agreement and present it to other nations

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. In this telegram Sir J. Tilley was instructed to make a statement to the Japanese Foreign Minister in terms similar to those used by Mr. MacDonald in his conversation with the Japanese Ambassador.

as a *fait accompli*. Prime Minister added that His Majesty's Government desired to secure the most cordial co-operation of Japan as soon as the matter had reached the stage when real negotiations could begin.

#### No. 14

*Note from Mr. MacDonald to General Dawes*

[A 4959/30/45]

July 11, 1929

In view of our conversations I have already decided to slow down our preparations for laying the keels of the two cruisers in my Naval Programme for 1928-29, and hope they need never be built.<sup>1</sup> Might I presume to remark that if a corresponding step could be taken on your side it would have a fine effect. I must announce this in the course of a week or two before the House rises, and a simultaneous statement of your plans would enable me to get this through without an attack on the ground that I had done something without any response.

J. R. M.

Handed to General Dawes by me.

J. R. M.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. MacDonald announced this decision in the House of Commons on July 24.

#### No. 15

*Sir J. Tilley (Tokyo) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received July 12)*

*No. 154 Telegraphic [A 4666/30/45]*

TOKYO, July 12, 1929

Your telegram No. 123.<sup>1</sup>

I saw Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day. He said he had not had time to study the question and therefore spoke unofficially, but he asked whether anything was actually being done in London at the present moment for instance in the way of working out the possibilities of yardstick and if so whether Japanese Government was expected to do the same, and whether any proposals were in existence about real negotiations mentioned in your telegram.

I said, also unofficially, I presumed stage for real negotiations would arrive when possibilities had been explored by experts and that I did not know any definite proposals on the subject but I would transmit his question.

Prime Minister's statement of policy included phrase to the effect that the aim of the Powers should be not only limitation of armaments but practical reduction.

<sup>1</sup> No. 13.

*Letter from General Dawes to Mr. MacDonald*

[A 4960/30/45]

My dear Prime Minister,

July 12, 1929

The contents of your letter of July 8th<sup>1</sup> on naval matters I duly communicated to my Government, and I am today in receipt of an instruction from the Secretary of State to communicate the following to you on behalf of the President himself:

'We wish to express our great appreciation of the letter from the Prime Minister. It is most constructive in its tenor and practical in its proposals. We have some variants to suggest as to procedure, which, by simplifying the problem, would even further expedite practical results.

'Referring in detail to his suggestions:

'(A) Paragraph one:—We are in agreement.

'(B) Paragraph two:—We are in agreement as to reduction of naval armaments.

'(C) Paragraph three:—We are in agreement—with the understanding that the expression "slightly different values in our respective national needs" refers to characteristics of combatant ships but does not refer to reasonable equality of the respective total combatant strength.

'(D) Paragraphs four and five:—These relate to the method of developing a yardstick by our technical advisers. It seems to us that the suggestion made may perhaps, by its short cut, lead to technical difficulties and, more important, to conflict within and between our different Navy Departments and their experts. We believe that instead of this suggestion we should take a little more time and direct our activities on both sides to securing a common line of thought in our different Navy Departments. To bring this about, we make the following suggestions to Mr. MacDonald for consideration which we think will greatly simplify the technical questions.

'(E) These points are: (a) We suggest that the scope of agreement shall cover all combatant ships. (b) We suggest that combatant strength shall be considered by categories of capital ships, aircraft carriers, cruisers, destroyers and submarines. (c) We suggest that right of limited transfer between these categories be recognised and that such transfer be made in accordance with an agreed yardstick. (d) As our capital ship and aircraft carrier status is fixed by the Washington Treaty of 1922, we suggest that these categories require no further discussion as to relative combatant strength. The only question for consideration in these categories is deferment of replacements.

'(F) We suggest that, in measuring relative combatant strength of ships, we should consider the elements of such yardstick to be: (a) Displacement; (b) guns; (c) age.

'Our general view is that protection, speed, habitability, etc., are entirely relative to the other factors and do not require special consideration.

<sup>1</sup> No. 12.

‘(G) We suggest that these factors may deserve different weight for different categories.

‘(H) It is not expected that any yardstick will be a mathematical nicety. It would appear to us that, if these suggestions in paragraphs E, F, and G meet with approval, we shall have enormously simplified the problem which we have to lay before naval experts and that they could quickly come to conclusions.

‘(I) Paragraph six:—We are in agreement.

‘(J) Paragraph seven:—We are in agreement.

‘(K) Paragraph eight:—This raises the question as to the location of the final conference. We still believe that this should be held open until our progress in these preliminary steps enables us to determine these final questions with the best chances of ultimate success.

‘(L) Paragraph nine:—Is affected by comment on paragraph eight. We are entirely agreeable as to the desirability of expediting matters as rapidly as we can and to do so with an assurance of success. We should hope to do this by simplifying our problem as much as possible by these direct discussions. If we could agree upon the principles in E and F, we could at once send a naval expert if it is desired, or we could mutually exchange views upon the weight to be given factors mentioned in F with hope of early decision.’

I am, etc.,

CHARLES R. DAWES

## No. 17

*Minute by Mr. MacDonald*

[A 4959/30/45]

July 14, 1929

The American Ambassador rang me and said he wished to see me without delay. He came in the afternoon and informed me that the only reason why he was in such a hurry was that he had received a cable from the Secretary of State which he felt he should communicate to me at once, as it would give me an afternoon of pleasure, so friendly was it.

He had two despatches<sup>1</sup> which he showed me—one, stating that no harm would be done if I announced that the question of my visit to the United States was at present the subject of diplomatic conversation as regards its time, and with a view to making it effective in promoting our common object of Naval Agreement. The other was with reference to the secret memorandum I communicated to the Ambassador at our last interview suggesting that as I had already decided to slow up the building of our two cruisers, it would help me greatly if the President could do something of a reciprocal character.

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to telegrams 176–7 from the Secretary of State to General Dawes. These telegrams are printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1929*, vol. i, pp. 145–7. The substance of these telegrams was given to Sir R. Vansittart on July 15 in a letter (not printed) from Mr. Atherton.

The despatch stated that the President might be able to slow up the building of three of their cruisers, but no announcement to that effect would have to be made here. It would be made from Washington after I had made my statement to the House of Commons.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The announcement was made by Mr. Hoover on July 24.

## No. 18

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir J. Tilley (Tokyo)*  
*No. 128 Telegraphic [A 4666/30/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, July 16, 1929

Your telegram No. 154<sup>1</sup> (of July 12: naval disarmament).

You may inform Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs unofficially that the proper British authorities have been engaged in working out the possibilities of a 'yardstick' and that it would clearly be an advantage if the Japanese Government would do the same so that all parties may be ready when the time comes to exchange ideas on this point.

<sup>1</sup> No. 15.

## No. 19

*Letter from Mr. MacDonald to General Dawes*  
*[A 4962/30/45]*

My dear Ambassador,

July 17, 1929

I must express to you my very great appreciation of the spirit and the contents of the communications you have, on behalf of your Government, made to me within the last day or two. The desire which your President has shown to understand us and to make possible a clearance of the points of difference that have hitherto prevented an agreement between us, has been a heartening proof that we have begun conversations which will not only end happily for us, but be a lead to the whole world.

The position of our conversations up to now seems to me to be as follows.

(1) We both agree that the Washington arrangements regarding first-class battleships and aircraft carriers will not be disturbed.

(2) We agree that there will be a parity between us as regards cruisers. Hitherto there have been difficulties between our experts on this subject arising out of the distribution of tonnage between large and small craft. We have agreed, however, that the somewhat differing situation of our two countries will be resolved by the construction of a yardstick and I am waiting for your proposals regarding this. Pending this, you and I, on behalf of our Governments, have agreed that we shall not allow technical points

to override the great public issues involved in our being able to come to an agreement.

In this connexion I should like to amend some figures which appear in the note which Mr. Atherton sent to Sir Robert Vansittart on the 15th instant.<sup>1</sup> He says, 'Fourteen of approximately the same type of cruisers (as the United States are laying down) have been completed by the British who have apparently in construction or otherwise, ten more'. These figures have been taken, apparently, from an out-of-date White Paper. Since then alterations have been made and the position to-day is: number built and building, 15; number projected, 3; these 3 include the 2 I have slowed down. I give you these figures because I am sure that they will be regarded by you and your Government as having a bearing upon our work. As I said to you in one of the interviews I had with you last week, I have slowed up the preparations for laying down the two cruisers included in the 1928 programme, and have done so not merely for the purpose of lengthening out the time for the completion of that programme, but in the hope that it is the first step towards a reduction.

(3) We agree to parity in destroyers and in submarines, parity in this case being equal gross tonnage in each of the two categories. I ought to tell you, however, that as soon as the Five-Power Conference meets I shall raise again the question of the use of submarines, and state my desire that they may be eliminated altogether. I know that I am in a somewhat weak *debating* position as regards this because the submarine is exactly the arm that can do Great Britain the most damage in the event of a naval war against us breaking out. My motive is, however, not that at all. I base myself on the fact that though all war is brutal and ruthless, the way in which the submarine is used raises that brutality and ruthlessness to a very much greater height than has hitherto been known.

That being the position we now only need the yardstick to make our agreement complete and I still press the wisdom of striking whilst the iron is hot and the public are expectant. I am hoping to see the French and Italian Ambassadors this week and to speak to them of what is being done within the limits of my assuring talk with the Japanese Ambassador. I had also better refer to the Five-Power preliminary Conference which, with your concurrence, is to be held here and for which you and I shall agree as to the terms of the invitation. They will need at least a fortnight's notice, and I am getting rather encumbered with international conferences.

First of all, there is the Reparations Conference which raises some very important issues for us and which is likely to require my presence if an agreement is to be reached.

Then there is the Assembly of the League at Geneva which I have promised to attend during the opening week at the beginning of September.

Finally, I must consider my visit to America which Mr. Stimson's recent message allows me to discuss with you. The House of Commons will meet at the end of October and my presence will be required here then.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 23, No. 17, note 1.



We can do little now without the yardstick but, if you would be so good as to come to see me we might discuss the next step of inviting the other naval Powers to the Conference, and also my visit to Washington.

With kindest regards, etc.,

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD

No. 20

*Memorandum from General Dawes to Mr. MacDonald<sup>1</sup>*

[A 5035/30/45]

WASHINGTON, D.C., July 22, 1929

With reference to the Prime Minister's statement of his understanding of the position, transmitted in your telegram No. 197, July 18, 5 p.m., please convey to him the following, which are our comments on his statement.

We agree with his first point regarding capital ships and feel that no further exploration of this matter is necessary at present. We shall, however, urge that replacements of capital ships shall be postponed until 1936.

With regard to his third point regarding parity in destroyers, we agree, assuming parity is reached in other classes. Such parity to be equal gross tonnage, as stated by Mr. MacDonald. In view of the fact that the United States now has a clear preponderance over Great Britain in the destroyer class, we propose that such parity be reached in this class by the scrapping by the United States of sufficient tonnage of destroyers to make ours equal to present British tonnage. This determination may meet with opposition on the part of the American public, because it is the only class where we have a preponderance over the British, but we are prepared to do this as a real contribution to reduction of armament which the United States can make when the fleets come to parity.

We agree in the same way with Mr. MacDonald with respect to submarine parity, to be equal gross tonnage and parity to be reached by the scrapping by the United States of submarine tonnage until it also equals British tonnage now existing. The desire of the Prime Minister to eliminate the use of submarines, and the reasons given by him for such desire meet with our agreement. The position of both the United States and Great Britain as to the use of submarines may be influenced, however, by the position of other nations. Such energetic action by America as to submarines and destroyers is predicated on energetic action as to cruisers on the part of Great Britain. It may be easier, with respect to destroyers, cruisers and submarines, to plan to bring about equality by scrapping prior to 1936 rather than by immediate action.

<sup>1</sup> This memorandum was given by General Dawes to Mr. MacDonald on July 22. Mr. MacDonald had asked General Dawes to call on him to discuss the statement which he (Mr. MacDonald) proposed to make in the House of Commons on July 24. At the time of this interview General Dawes had not received from Mr. Stimson the full text of the telegram upon which the memorandum is based. The full text is printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1929*, vol. i, pp. 149-52.

With reference to the cruiser class, brought up in the third point of the Prime Minister's statement, this is the nub of our troubles and we realize that it is a really difficult problem. Wide divergence of views caused the failure of the Geneva Conference. We both are now trying to make a fresh start on the principle of parity in cruisers. This means a real change of purpose, but the important practical question is at what point as to tonnage and time is parity to be established. In determining that question, a mutual understanding of our actual tonnage positions is of great importance. Some doubt exists in our minds as to whether we understand correctly, and it is not clear to us whether our position is known to the Prime Minister and whether the relative strengths have been considered by him.

The following is our general understanding of British cruiser strength:

Of larger cruisers in service they have fourteen as follows: *Kent, Canberra, Vindictive, Frobisher, Hawkins, Devonshire, Berwick, London, Sussex, Effingham, Suffolk, Cumberland, Cornwall, Australia*. They have seven in construction: *York, Surrey, Shropshire, Northumberland, Dorsetshire, Norfolk, and Exeter*; and three more authorised but not in construction. These total twenty-four, aggregating about 231,800 tons. Are we to understand that, of these units included in the above 231,800 tons, Great Britain can stop construction of eight, and reduce her total tonnage of large cruisers to about 160,000 tons by thus abandoning eight units?

Great Britain has in addition, according to our tables, 38 smaller cruisers of varying ages, of 171,000 aggregate tons, in service, with none under construction. The total British cruiser tonnage authorised, in construction and in service amounts to about 402,800 tons, under our original assumption stated above. This tonnage is all well under twenty years of age. Great Britain might check cruiser situation at about 331,000 tons, if we read correctly the Prime Minister's letter.

The cruiser strength of the United States consists of a total of 230,000 tons in thirteen large cruisers authorised and ten large cruisers in construction. We have in addition ten smaller sized cruisers aggregating 70,500 making a total of about 300,000 tons. As part of the American program for the reduction of arms, we propose to scrap now all our other cruisers, consisting of 22 cruisers, all over twenty years of age and aggregating more than 150,000 tons. This country also is anxious to reduce its authorised program to any extent that will result in parity with Great Britain. The extent to which we can go depends, however, upon the action taken by Great Britain in checking her strength in cruisers. The difference between 300,000 tons and 402,800 tons cannot be bridged by any yardstick; much less can any yardstick bridge any wider difference which reduction in the present American authorised program might create. Once it is settled by agreement between us, however, at what spot Great Britain is willing to check its cruiser strength and establish parity, then the yardstick can be effectively used to make fair evaluation of the two cruiser fleets and the apparent difference in the tonnages will be lessened.

No. 21

*Letter from Mr. MacDonald to General Dawes*

[A 5003/30/45]

My dear General,

July 23, 1929

I have been thinking over the despatch you showed me yesterday and though I have not yet had it<sup>1</sup> (I am writing this early in the morning when only the birds are up, and they even are sleepy) to study, it is clear that it raises a problem which we have assumed was smaller than it appears to be. I have been waiting for the 'yardstick', but the despatch of yesterday says that the gap between us is too wide for a 'yardstick' to span. So we must examine it, and I must get advice and guidance.

I propose, if it meets your convenience, to stay in town till we settle something. This week finds me full of concerns till the House rises. Would it be possible for us to meet on Monday morning<sup>2</sup> to go into the whole matter of this tonnage of cruisers and to go at it till we agree on how we stand? If Mr. Gibson could be with us I would bring Mr. Alexander, the First Lord (Civil), and a day or two ought to see the end of our preliminary conversations. Then I shall go on holiday!

I am, my dear Ambassador,

Yours very sincerely,

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD

<sup>1</sup> No. 20. General Dawes read to Mr. MacDonald, on the morning of July 23, the section of this telegram which had not been received in time for communication during the conversation on July 22.

<sup>2</sup> July 29.

No. 22

*Letter from Mr. MacDonald to General Dawes*

[A 5036/30/45]

My dear General,

July 24, 1929

I was hoping that we might have been able to proceed with a yardstick examination and test in accordance with the lines of our conversations, but the dispatch you handed to me yesterday raises the whole question of tonnage in its old absolute form. A failure to escape from this led to the break-down of the Naval Conference at Geneva. Your Government is of opinion that the differences in cruiser tonnage held or contemplated by the United States and Great Britain are so great as to defy the successful operation of the yardstick plan straight away. It gives figures to prove this, and concludes that we must, as a preliminary to further progress, agree 'at what spot Great Britain is willing to check its cruiser strength and establish parity'. When that is done, 'the yardstick can be effectively used to make fair evaluation of the two cruiser fleets and the apparent difference in the tonnages will be lessened'. In order to save time, I was hoping that we might

have cleared this up at the same time as we were considering the effect of the yardstick which you were to propose, but I see that the figures of absolute tonnage upon which your people have been working do appear to be a formidable obstacle and I am anxious to remove these and any other difficulties which lie in our way.

In a previous note I warned you not to work upon an old White Paper outlining our building programme of two or three years ago, because the plan there laid down has not been carried out by my predecessors. In the course of conversation over the dispatch which deals with the ingredients of the 'yardstick' I also referred to the variety of ship included in the cruiser category; and I shall now state what information I have gathered since I saw you yesterday and the day before.

*Large Cruisers.* We have 22 not 24, built and projected, the total tonnage being 216,200, not 231,000. From the original programme upon which Washington seems to be working our predecessors dropped three 8-inch cruisers and that has been announced for a long time, and we ourselves are holding up laying the keels of other 3-2 in the 1928 programme and 1 in that of 1929.

The relative value of classes in the cruiser categories raise details which can best be discussed and settled over a table with authorised representatives dealing with the points there and then. But in this note I point out by way of illustration that the *Hawkins* group laid down for war purposes in 1916 cannot, either in their present condition as ships or in their armament of seven 7.5-inch guns, hand worked and throwing a projectile of 200 lbs. instead of 250 lbs., really be valued on displacement tonnage alone. We regard them as being nearer to the modern 6-inch cruiser than to its 8-inch companion. This is pre-eminently a case for the yardstick. The dispatch I am now considering includes their total tonnage of about 40,000 in the Large Cruiser tonnage.

*Smaller Cruisers.* Of these we have 40 classed as 6 inch with a tonnage of 179,270. But here again we really need a yardstick because the tonnage value requires to be adjusted. I am told, for instance, that your *Omaha* class of which you have 10 carries 120 6-inch guns and a total tonnage of 70,500. They cannot be compared to our 'C' class of which we have 24, carrying 109 6-inch guns and of a tonnage of 100,250. Here again is a case for an examination round a table, not of service experts in command but of statesmen working upon material supplied by service experts.

To sum up, I give you a table as I have received it in reply to enquiries I have made since I have had your dispatch.

8-inch Cruisers	(British)		
	15 ships	146,800 tons	..
	3 projected	30,000	176,800
	(United States)		
	13 building	130,000	..
	10 projected	100,000	230,000

7.5-inch Cruisers	Gt. Britain	..	..
	<i>Hawkins</i> class 4	39,400	39,400
	U.S.A.	none	..
6-inch Cruisers	Gt. Britain 40	179,270	179,270
	U.S.A. 10	70,500	70,500

This is a somewhat complicated tangle to unravel but I am sure we can do it if we go about it in the right way, and keep political and not service hands in control. When I say this I must add that I have found my service advisers most anxious to come to an agreement. Still, we must remain in control.

My view is that it will not be helpful for either of us to begin by stating absolute limits, but rather to examine the present condition, work out parity within it, total the results and see what happens, examine the total and if it be satisfactory take it as the absolute limit, if it be unsatisfactory return to an examination of why it is so, and continue this till we are satisfied. For I will not assume that there is any doubt about our agreeing. I have had some experience with these negotiations and it all urges me to come to close grips with details and from an examination of details to come to comprehensive conclusions. We begin by assuming that our countries each has (*sic*) an absolute minimum enforced upon it by the present state of the world, and that the settlement of details must conform to that general requirement. If the settlement of details when summed up get (*sic*) beyond it, we must reduce the categories; if they get us under it, we must expand them. As we are both determined to agree, I feel pretty strongly that that is both the surest and the quickest way to set to work.

I am, etc.,

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD

## No. 23

*Sir E. Howard (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received  
July 26)*

*No. 328 Telegraphic [A 4988/30/45]*

WASHINGTON, July 25, 1929

At lunch at the White House yesterday after ceremony of proclamation of Treaty for Renunciation of War I sat next to President and our conversation naturally turned to Naval Disarmament and Prime Minister's announcement of statement in Parliament which had not yet been published and question of Prime Minister's visit to the United States.

Although through the noise of general conversation the President who speaks in low tones is not easy for me to understand I gathered the following points.

1. President is of opinion that the Prime Minister's visit would do much good if it comes after some agreement is announced as to general principles.
2. He considers that while it is advisable to maintain the system of

dividing ships of war into different categories it would help to promote agreement if excess tonnage in one category above requirements of any signatory Power could be used for another category though amount to be diverted should be limited to a third. I touched lightly on the question of naval bases. He said he did not think that they should be taken into consideration as a factor in measuring navies. If we were to persist in considering other factors than ships themselves, tonnage, armament, speed, age, etc., there would be no end to it and it would be practically impossible to find any yardstick.

## No. 24

### *Memorandum agreed between Mr. MacDonald and General Dawes<sup>1</sup>* *[A 5059/30/45]*

LONDON, July 29, 1929

As a result of conversations thus far completed, agreement between the British and American Governments would appear to cover the following points:

1. It is agreed that the Conference for the reduction of naval armaments shall be inaugurated as a logical consequence of the Kellogg Pact.
2. It is agreed that reduction shall be carried out on the basis of parity in combatant strength.
3. It is agreed that this parity should be reached by categories of capital ships, aircraft carriers, cruisers, destroyers and submarines.
4. It is agreed not to disturb the provisions of the Washington Treaty covering capital ships and aircraft carriers. (See Point (a), below.)
5. It is agreed that a 'yardstick' shall be adopted by which the comparative values of ships within each category shall be measured.
6. The two Governments are in agreement as to the principle of abolishing submarines. It is realised that it may be impossible to secure the consent of other nations to this step but the two Governments should make a common effort in this direction.
7. The American Government is disposed, subject to reaching agreement on other questions, to scrap its excess destroyers and excess submarines down to the British level either at present or by 1936.

The American Government considers it desirable that the following points be settled in principle as a necessary preliminary to any Conference:

(a) The American Government considers it desirable that we reach agreement that all replacements of capital ships under the Washington Treaty be postponed until after 1936. By this means we would secure a holiday

<sup>1</sup> This agreed memorandum was based upon a telegram of July 26 from Mr. Stimson to General Dawes. The text of this telegram was accepted, with certain modifications, by Mr. Macdonald at a meeting on July 29 with General Dawes at which Mr. Gibson and Mr. Alexander were also present. The text of the telegram from Mr. Stimson is printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1929*, vol. i, pp. 162-4. A report of the meeting is printed, *op. cit.*, pp. 164-6.

from major naval construction (capital ships and aircraft carriers) until after 1936. As at that time, under the Treaty, it will be necessary to revise the programmes, that would seem to be an appropriate date to make a further effort for further general revision downward of naval construction.

(b) There is entire agreement that we must have a 'yardstick', but the American Government considers it essential that there should be an agreement upon certain principles upon which the 'yardstick' shall be based before a definite series of figures can be presented. It is therefore suggested that in the cruiser category, for instance, we should take the new 10,000-ton 8-inch gun cruiser as representing the standard, and that we should, in measuring relative combatant strength of other ships in the cruiser category, take as the elements of the 'yardstick' the three factors of displacement, age and guns. It would seem that protection, speed, habitability, etc., are entirely subordinate factors and do not require special consideration. No doubt these factors may deserve different weights for other categories.

(c) It is desirable that agreement be reached as to the ages at which the different categories become obsolete for purposes of scrapping. It is suggested that we adopt 20 years as the life of cruisers, 16 for destroyers, and 13 for submarines.

(d) It is the impression of the American Government that we should seek to equate our cruiser, destroyer and submarine forces in 1936 instead of immediately, as this would seem better suited to the British situation.

(e) If the principles of paragraphs (b), (c) and (d) can be adopted, we have resolved the technical problem into the application of the yardstick to the category of cruisers. Technical difficulties will doubtless arise in which there will need to be a spirit of compromise, but it is believed that the whole problem will be infinitely simplified if we can agree upon the principles to be submitted to the naval experts.

(f) Both Governments are of course anxious to find a solution which will allow them to reduce their authorized cruiser programmes. Study will be devoted to this subject.

(g) It is the view of the American Government that, if we can agree to these principles, a preliminary Conference should be held in London, representative of the five naval Powers, for the purpose of seeking their adherence to such of the foregoing principles as concern them.

(h) Under the terms of the Washington Treaty for the Limitation of Naval Armaments a Conference of the five naval Powers is to be held in Washington in 1931. The date would normally fall in August but, in deference to the wishes of the British Government, the American Government agreed at the Naval Conference in Geneva that the date should be advanced, if the other naval Powers concurred, and that the Conference should be held in January 1931. It is therefore felt that it might be well, by mutual consent, to merge the 1931 Conference and the Five-Power Conference envisaged for next December, thereby avoiding the necessity for holding two Conferences on much the same subject.

(i) A formal Conference could be called in December following the Prime

Minister's visit to the United States. The American Government is convinced that the result of that visit will be further to promote good feeling and to pave the way for mutual understanding.

No. 25

*Memorandum by Mr. MacDonald*<sup>1</sup>

[A 5059/30/45]

GENERAL AGREEMENT AS TO CRUISERS

July 29, 1929

1. The British Government would be satisfied with a large Cruiser strength of 15 and would agree to the American Government building up to 18.

2. The British Government would ask for an equivalent (to be measured by the yardstick) in 6-inch Cruisers so that their total in that class should be 45.

3. As regards the *Hawkins* (or *Effingham*) group of 4 Cruisers an agreement will be come to that for the purposes of classification they shall during their lifetime be counted amongst the 6-inch class and then replaced by ordinary 6-inch ships. Consideration will be given to having this equation completed by 1936.

4. In order to arrive at parity the United States may construct up to ten 6-inch gun ships.

<sup>1</sup> This memorandum was drawn up by Mr. MacDonald during the meeting of July 29 as a personal and tentative proposal (agreed to by General Dawes and Mr. Gibson) which he (Mr. MacDonald) proposed to submit for the consideration of the Admiralty and upon which he wished to know Mr. Stimson's views.

No. 26

*Letter from Mr. MacDonald to General Dawes*

[A 5059/30/45]

My dear General,

July 30, 1929

I have been studying the agreement which we came to yesterday and decided to send to our Governments, and the more I think of it the more satisfactory it seems. There are two small points, however, which we overlooked. The first is in paragraph 5, sheet 1,—it is provided that the yardstick shall be adopted to fix comparative values of ships within each category and not only within the cruiser category. Later on, on sheet 3, paragraph (e)—it is assumed that the yardstick will only be required for cruisers because we have already come to an agreement on tonnage as regards destroyers and submarines. The latter decision I am sure is the best for both of us because if we were to go to the Five Power Conference and say to France and Italy, "You can get for destroyers and submarines tonnage which you can save



from the other categories,' we shall get into endless bother and will create a new menace which will be peculiarly embarrassing for me and will give the Admiralty here a strong case for an increase in our small cruisers. As I am out for reduction all along the line I should like to avoid this without doing any other nation a real injustice.

The second point is the paragraph relating to lengthening the lives of first-class battleships. We would like to do this by some arrangement which would not mean that we should have to discharge the whole of our staff by a revolutionary stroke of the pen, but would enable us to keep on a sort of nucleus. This means that we should have to spread the lengthening of the life over a series of years. It is only a matter of arrangement and not of principle or object. From a business man's point of view you will appreciate this point.

I should also like to let you know that, although I agreed yesterday to the figures of 15 and 45 as my programme of cruiser building, I am going now to work to find out whether I cannot reduce both these figures, but certainly the second one, if we can get an agreement with Japan, France and Italy. So, if there is any objection from America that the total reduction involved in our agreement of yesterday is a little disappointing, please let it remain where it is because I think, if we can extend our agreement to other Powers, I can offer to you a still better arrangement.

With kindest regards, etc.,  
J. RAMSAY MACDONALD

No. 27

*Memorandum by Mr. Craigie on a conversation with the Japanese  
Ambassador*

[A 5251/30/45]

FOREIGN OFFICE, July 30, 1929

The Japanese Ambassador called this morning and said he was anxious to obtain elucidation on certain points connected with the naval discussions. He said that he had been kept fully informed by General Dawes, but that the General himself was a little hazy about details, and he wished to fill in the gaps. At this point I interpolated a remark to the effect that I knew it was by arrangement between the Prime Minister and General Dawes that full information was being given to the Ambassador in regard to the discussions which were proceeding. The Prime Minister's time was so fully occupied that it was probably easier for General Dawes to keep Mr. Matsudaira informed, but nevertheless the information given by the General might really be taken as coming from both sides. Mr. Matsudaira replied that he fully appreciated this, but nevertheless he would be glad of certain information direct from the British side. I said I would do my best to elucidate any points which were not clear to the Ambassador, but warned him that I had not yet received any information as to what had happened at yesterday's conversation between the Prime Minister and General Dawes.

The Ambassador's first question was: Had any arrangement been come to between the two countries in regard to the division of warships into categories? I replied that the conversations so far had been dealing with questions relating to procedure and to the establishment of 'parity' between the British and American navies, and, to the best of my knowledge, the question of categories had not yet been seriously tackled. Mr. Matsudaira remarked that hitherto the United States had insisted that there should only be one category of cruiser while we had held out for two categories: How was this difficulty to be solved? I said that I thought this problem had not yet been seriously tackled. If a satisfactory 'yardstick' could be discovered for measuring the comparative strength of varying types of cruisers there was clearly less need for the division of cruisers into two categories, but this must not be taken as meaning that His Majesty's Government had taken any final decision on this point. It seemed to me a matter which would have to be left in abeyance until it was known whether a 'yardstick' could be discovered which would be satisfactory to all the naval Powers.

The Ambassador next observed that from the correspondence communicated to him by General Dawes, he had noticed that the Americans were asking us to state a minimum for our cruiser strength. Had we agreed to this and, if so, could I say what this minimum was? I replied that our needs in the matter of cruiser strength were both absolute and relative. In view of the element of relativity it seemed to me impossible for our Admiralty to say what would be the minimum strength to which this country could agree until it was known to what minimum other Powers not at present engaged in the conversations would be prepared to reduce their own cruiser strength. I therefore did not believe that any such minimum figures had yet been given to the United States nor that it would be possible to give them at the present stage of the proceedings. The Ambassador then referred to the Prime Minister's statement in the House of Commons on the 24th instant in which he stated that the 'Board of Admiralty . . . having expressed their technical view on the minimum armaments they considered to be necessary . . . have furnished us with help in achieving our object, etc.' This passage, the Ambassador thought, seemed to indicate that a minimum of cruiser strength had been laid down by the Admiralty. I replied that the Prime Minister's statement undoubtedly referred to the minimum armaments which this country could maintain *in existing circumstances and in the absence of an agreement*. This minimum was represented by our existing cruiser programme as modified by the slowing-down process indicated in the Prime Minister's statement. What the United States Government were understood to have asked for, however, was the minimum to which this country could go if an agreement were ultimately to be reached involving general reductions, and it was difficult to see how any satisfactory answer could be returned to so hypothetical a question. Finally the Ambassador enquired whether anything had yet been done to agree upon a 'yardstick', and I assured him that, to the best of my knowledge, no discussions had yet taken place on the technical aspects of this problem. The Ambassador expressed himself as fully satisfied with

these replies. He added that he would like to see the Prime Minister before the latter proceeded on leave because he had a communication to make to him on this subject from the Japanese Government.

I informed Sir Robert Vansittart at once of the Ambassador's request.

R. L. CRAIGIE

## No. 28

### *Letter from Mr. MacDonald to General Dawes*

[A 5300/30/45]

My dear General,

August 8, 1929

According to my promise, I put down in writing the matters of importance dealt with in our conversation<sup>1</sup> of the 6th instant at which Mr. Gibson and the First Lord were present. I have been studying very closely whilst in Lossiemouth the recent dispatches sent to me in reply to my letter to you last week, with a view to discovering whether I am able to meet Mr. Hoover's double desire to get parity as well as reduction. The crux of the problem is the cruiser category and upon that it is necessary for me to make one or two observations because I do not think that Mr. Hoover sees in detail what my position is, and it is necessary that it should be understood.

1. Were the question of the cruiser tonnage one between the United States and us alone there would be no difficulty. You could build as much as you like or as little as you like. I should not trouble, because the Government declines to make any provisions for the possibility of the United States being an enemy. Therefore I think that Washington is pressing me unduly when it asks me to reduce naval figures compiled solely on account of our needs in relation to the rest of the world.

2. American building, however, does affect me indirectly. Japan may say, were your cruisers much in excess of ours, that whatever ratio it accepts must be in relation to the larger and not the smaller fleet. That, owing to U.S. building, would compel me to retain a Japanese relationship which would impose a heavy programme upon me.

3. In order that an idea may be had of why our cruiser figures appear to be high, the following facts should in fairness be kept in mind:

(a) The British Fleet is not one unit. If it were, I could reduce considerably. It is scattered into different and remote divisions, each with functions to perform relating to peace and not to war conditions. I know that if war broke out concentration would naturally take place, but that cannot be helped. I really cannot neglect peace duties in order to avoid the suspicion that war is in our minds all the time. Let me state what the cruiser disposition today is, so that what I now say may be plain.

<sup>1</sup> The United States Government were unable to accept Mr. MacDonald's proposal in No. 25. On receiving a note of their disagreement Mr. MacDonald wrote a letter to General Dawes (August 1) explaining the reasons for his proposal and suggesting a meeting with General Dawes and Mr. Gibson on August 6. It has not been possible to trace a copy of Mr. MacDonald's letter of August 1 in the British archives. The text of the letter is printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1929*, vol. i, pp. 171-4.

1. With our two main Fleets—the Atlantic and the Mediterranean—there are three 8-inch, and twelve 6-inch cruisers (in September, there will be 4 and 11 respectively).

2. On foreign stations (China and Australia) there are 7 and 12 respectively.

3. Two are at home on Instructional Duties.

4. 14 are in reserve or undergoing large repairs.

5. 4 are in Care and Maintenance.

You will at once see how this division of the whole Fleet necessitates the maintenance of figures higher than if the Fleet operated as one unit.

(b) Put it another way. Australia, New Zealand and the numerous islands for which we are responsible in the Southern Pacific are policed by 4 cruisers in commission and two in reserve, and remember these are the only resources we have in the event of civil trouble or lawlessness breaking out. India, Burma, the Malay Straits, Somaliland, Kenya, the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean Islands are policed by 3 cruisers and a few sloops which barely can make one visit a year to necessary ports. When one visualises what the function and necessary work of the cruisers are and when my high figures are apportioned to duties, one begins to see the difficulty of a drastic reduction.

(c) The cruiser category for me is therefore only partly a fighting category and is to a considerable extent a police category. (That gives us a possible chance of an agreement if we could decide upon police units which, however, must be habitable in the tropics as I must consider the comforts of the men.)

4. I have been working at a scheme which would make British figures in 1936 the standard of parity. Then, without replacement in the meanwhile, we should have fifteen 8-inch and thirty-four 6-inch ships, a total of 49. I hope that you will see in the light of the above functions of cruisers that there is not much margin for reduction unless in the meantime, by our united efforts, we can make the world *feel* peace. But I must deal with to-day, and it is quite impossible for me to think of figures now which are remote from to-day—say beyond 1936. I shall however steadily reduce as national security is found by other means than arms, and I shall continue to work for that other security. *Whether it is possible to fix as a first resting place upon the 1936 position depends upon an international agreement.*

5. If your President would agree to this 1936 position as being a temporary maximum goal to be worked for I can see my way to meet him subject to the proviso I have made. That position is reached by the ordinary operation of scrapping, but, as I really do not see the practicability of an absolute naval holiday as a *business* proposition, I would propose to scrap each year one cruiser which I would not otherwise scrap and replace it by a scheme of building which would leave us with 50 cruisers and no more.

6. I ought to say that that will leave me in a bit of a fix between 1936 and 1940 as cruisers fall out in bunches during these years to a total of no less than 23; but again that would be a matter of arrangement in manipulation of building. That might at times appear to be an increase, but of course the whole scheme would be published so that mischief makers might be disarmed.

7. I again press for the production of some yardstick to let us see where we are in actual effective strength. Every textbook and naval report I have consulted in order to be prepared for these conversations show that the 8-inch cruisers are worth in the event of a fight almost an infinity of smaller craft and guns. You in your 8-inch ships have more guns than are in ours, and so in your *Omahas*. It is not profitable to talk of these ships as though their tons were of the same value. Let us know where we are. The constant reference to absolute tonnage in your recent messages stands in the way of a clear vision of either quantitative or qualitative negotiation. Your declaration at Geneva was very specific upon this point.

8. I emphasize the obligations placed upon me by my geographical position which the United States does not have to bear. That makes the Five Power Conference so important to me, and I could only go as far as I have proposed if that Conference is a success.

9. It has been suggested that we might come to a covering political agreement by which after settling figures between ourselves we might provide that in the event of other Powers building so as to cause either party disquiet, our agreement might be varied in consequence. We may have to resort to this, but (a) it would leave uncertainty and a possibility of serious disagreement and (b) would lay both of us open to press stunts and manufactured panics. It should be used only as a last expedient.

10. I have explained the need we have for cruisers to a minimum figure irrespective of programmes which compete with any other nation; I have made another suggestion for solving the problem what the standard of parity should be, and understand that Mr. Gibson has some suggestions to advance upon that in relation to the yardstick, and a transfer of destroyer tonnage to cruiser denominations. That, however, may be dangerous in the light of the Five Power Conference problems. I am also examining the possibility of a smaller police craft. I hope I have made it clear that I shall go to the utmost possible length to meet Mr. Hoover. But there are things I cannot do. I cannot take the necessary police off the seas, and I cannot make an agreement with America alone which leaves me at the mercy of Powers with which I have no agreement or a very imperfect one. I believe that our somewhat different requirements can be met, but give and take and a yardstick are required.

Believe me to be, etc.,

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD

#### No. 29

*Sir J. Tilley (Tokyo) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received August 12)*

*No. 180 Telegraphic [A 5318/30/45]*

TOKYO, August 12, 1929

From press reports and conversations of Naval Attaché with naval officers, Japanese naval opinion seems to see grave difficulties in the way of solution of technical problems of naval yardstick.

Minister of Marine is quoted as stating to press representatives that it might well be that aggregate tonnage and age of vessels was the only feasible solution. He is said to have declared that Japanese would demand auxiliary ship ratio of 10 : 7 at any future conference and this is in accordance with expectation of Naval Attaché. Prime Minister on the other hand is reported as having stated to press representatives that Government have not yet reached any decision on this subject although naval authorities may be thinking of such a ratio as essential for national defence.

### No. 30

*Sir E. Howard (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received August 17)*  
*No. 368 Telegraphic [A 5486/30/45]*

WASHINGTON, August 16, 1929

My telegram No. 350.<sup>1</sup>

Please inform Prime Minister as follows.

I saw Secretary of State yesterday on his return to Washington and made enquiries as desired by Prime Minister's letter of July 26. Secretary of State telephoned to me this morning that—

1. President will be very glad to receive Prime Minister early in October if that is convenient.

2. President and Secretary of State will discuss with me arrangements to be made as to Prime Minister's engagements here as soon as date of visit is fixed.

3. President entirely concurs in Prime Minister's view that there should be nothing in the nature of negotiations during his visit but only discussion on general situation of a friendly informal and unofficial character.

Secretary of State told me yesterday that there had arisen some days ago possibility of hitch in negotiations regarding naval reduction but that he hoped that difficulty was now in a fair way to settlement. He hinted however fairly broadly that in the President's view visit might be misunderstood if no general settlement were reached beforehand and not be the success which he hoped it would in both countries.

<sup>1</sup> This telegram (not printed) dealt with proposed arrangements for the Prime Minister's visit.

### No. 31

*Sir E. Howard (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received August 17)*  
*No. 369 Telegraphic [A 5486/30/45]*

WASHINGTON, August 16, 1929

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

Since writing above Secretary of State has telephoned to me again that President wished me to convey to Prime Minister an invitation to stay at

<sup>1</sup> No. 30.

White House during his visit. Secretary of State said that both President and himself felt this would make a most favourable impression in this country and that it would give President far better opportunities for long and informal conversations with Prime Minister than if he stayed at Embassy. There can be no doubt this is the case and though I shall much regret not having the honour of entertaining the Prime Minister, I cannot but strongly recommend that Mr. Hoover's friendly invitation be accepted. I should be glad to know how long the Prime Minister proposes to stay at Washington. If more than three days I would recommend that he might go to the White House first and afterwards come to the Embassy for remainder of the visit.

## No. 32

### *Memorandum from General Dawes to Mr. MacDonald<sup>1</sup>*

[A 5476/30/45]

[Undated]

With regard to the Prime Minister's letter of August 8th, we have the following comments to make:

In general his letter is considered highly important and, provided we correctly understand his position at this time, it is believed that we see daylight, and that great progress towards an agreement is marked therein.

The American Government recognizes, as he [Mr. MacDonald] has stated in Paragraph (1) of his letter, that it is essential to him to take into account his naval needs with relation to the rest of the world. It is recognized also, as set forth in his Paragraph (2), that his relationship with Japan must be borne in mind, although it is not entirely clear as to what he means<sup>2</sup> when he speaks, in Paragraph (2), of larger and smaller cruiser fleets, since fleets are to be at parity. Should his meaning be that the Japanese might insist upon Japan's having the same ratio with the United States as to larger cruiser units which she would have with Great Britain as to smaller cruiser units, the Prime Minister is clear, but it is not believed that such a position would be taken by Japan. It is understood, of course, that we must consider Japan's wishes.

We think we understand the Prime Minister's Paragraphs (3-a), (3-b) and (3-c), and there is no disposition to question his judgment as to the functions of the cruisers and as to the number of units which he considers necessary properly to carry out the said functions. It is understood that, generally speaking, 50 units will be required by him for the functions described which cruisers are necessary for now carrying out.

However, with regard to the foregoing, there is one particular in which

<sup>1</sup> This memorandum, which reached Mr. MacDonald at Lossiemouth on August 18, was based on a telegram of August 15 from Mr. Stimson to General Dawes. The text of Mr. Stimson's telegram is printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1929*, vol. i, pp. 190-5.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. MacDonald made the following note on this sentence: 'My meaning was that if America built beyond us say in large cruisers we might not care but Japan might argue that its agreed ratio was to be as regards America and not us. That we could not accept.'

the matter is rather differently seen by us. We fail to see why it is necessary to have the character of cruisers the British are now using in order to carry out all of these functions, but on this we shall later on make comment.

The Prime Minister's Paragraph (4): We are in agreement that the December 31st, 1936, British figures shall be regarded as the standard of parity, and it is understood that (without replacements meanwhile) the British will have at that time 49 cruisers which will comprise (1) of 8-inch cruisers 15, 10 of them being constructed already; (2) of the *Hawkins* class 4 with 7.5 guns; (3) of the 6-inch class 30; thus meaning that Great Britain, before December 31st, 1936, will have scrapped all cruisers which were completed before 1916.

If there are no replacements, we understand that there would be practically little margin for reduction unless in the meantime there should have happened something which will make the world take a different attitude towards peace, and furthermore, we understand that beyond 1936 the Prime Minister cannot think of figures. It is also understood that upon international agreement depends the question of whether or not it will be possible to fix upon the 1936 position as the first resting place.

The Prime Minister's Paragraph (5): We are agreeable to fix upon the December 31st, 1936, position as the temporary goal to be sought, subject, however, to such provisos as either the British or ourselves now find it necessary to state. It is understood that the Prime Minister feels that there must be a minimum programme of building instead of stopping replacements as the United States has urged, and it is his intention, as we understand it, during the period from now until 1936, to scrap 6 cruisers which were completed in 1916, as well as those which were completed before that date, making a total of 14 to be scrapped (the 3 cruisers which are now on the lists at . . .,<sup>1</sup> *Birmingham* and *Yarmouth* are considered as having been already scrapped and do not enter into the present discussion). The above 14 cruisers are to be replaced by 7 others, and we assume that those cruisers which the Prime Minister intends to scrap are the oldest ones on his list or, in other words, those finished in 1916. Is that correct?

The Prime Minister does not state the particular boats to be scrapped, or the tonnage of those which will be rebuilt as replacement. This information is important, and we should be happy to be advised particularly both as to the tonnage and type of replacements, whether from the new type of 6,500-ton 6-inch gun cruisers or whether from the 4,000-ton type. We shall make further suggestions later on on this subject.

The Prime Minister's Paragraph (6): We appreciate that the Prime Minister has a number of cruisers going out of commission between 1936 and 1940, so that those years, provided the world shall not have changed, may see extensive building.

The Prime Minister's Paragraph 7: His inquiry will be dealt with in this message later on.

<sup>1</sup> The text here is uncertain. The text of the telegram to General Dawes reads, at this point, 'now on the sale list *Conquest*, *Birmingham*, and *Yarmouth*'.



His Paragraph 8: We also realise that the arrangements which are being suggested between us are contingent on the success of the Conference of the Five Powers, although we urge, and shall continue to urge that upon agreement by Great Britain, the United States and Japan it shall be consummated. However, it is earnestly hoped that Italy and France will join but, if not, Japan, Great Britain and ourselves may well come to an agreement which would contain a clause covering the contingency of a menacing programme of building on the part of any Power not signatory.

His Paragraph 9: We are willing to abide by the Prime Minister's decision with regard to the covering political agreement which we suggested in a previous message: in other words, to leave out of consideration that question for the moment and only resort to it if all other plans fail.

The Prime Minister's 10: We are in sympathy with his remarks as to doubting the advisability of a transfer to the cruiser denomination of destroyer tonnage,<sup>1</sup> and agree, in the light of Five-Power Conference problems, that it may be dangerous, particularly as relating to submarines. We are willing for the present to leave that out of our attempt to come to agreement. As he states, we agree, for the purpose of this negotiation, that the Prime Minister cannot take off of the seas the necessary police craft nor can he make an agreement with the United States alone, which would leave him at the mercy of the Powers with which he has no agreement at all or even a very imperfect one.

In his letter there are several other questions raised to which it is desired to make an explanation of our position. In his Paragraph (10) the Prime Minister states that he thinks our somewhat different requirements can be met by 'give and take', and also by the yardstick. Furthermore, in his Paragraph (7) he refers to our constant reference to absolute tonnage which stands in the way of clear vision. He urges us again in his Paragraph (7) to produce a yardstick 'to let us see where we are in actual effective strength'. This friendly frankness of Mr. MacDonald deserves to be met in a spirit similarly sincere, and we have been trying to do this. But let us once again try to make our position absolutely clear even more specifically. From our point of view, parity is in our negotiations not only an essential element but we think it is the underlying reform in both our countries from which we can hope to obtain the greatest future benefits. As was pointed out by Mr. Hoover, in his address on Memorial Day,<sup>1</sup> it transforms the relations of America and Great Britain, in respect to our armaments, from one of competition to one of co-operation. It relieves the atmosphere from the psychology of potential war and turns it into one of friendly agreement. The incentive to build is removed as soon as both countries understand they are not to outbuild each other. It is a practical method of inculcating among the general public of both countries the spirit which the Prime Minister describes in his Paragraph (1) as being his own attitude towards America. From this standpoint the Prime Minister can see that not only must parity be substantially real but must be recognizable as such by the people of Great Britain

<sup>1</sup> May 30, 1929.

and the United States. It must not be a matter of such difficult technique that each people will think it is being outwitted by the other. For this very reason we can never get very far away from the quantitative aspect of parity which has been used in such negotiations hitherto.

The only criterion of comparison which the United States has used in previous negotiations has been the easily understood criterion of displacement tonnage. As we realised that this has not succeeded in meeting the existing conditions of our two countries, we advanced the suggestion of the yardstick at Geneva, and we have desired that when conferences or consultations are held there might result from them substantial agreement among the naval experts of all countries to make allowances for the factors of gun calibre and age, which would discount absolute tonnages. We assumed that the yardstick would be used particularly with reference to the cruiser category and felt that within that category inevitably the discounts must be somewhat in favour of Britain, simply because its cruiser fleet in 1936 will be older and will contain a greater number of small cruiser units of lesser gun calibre. In the beginning it had been hoped, if a yardstick might be devised, perhaps it would measure and make possible an exchange of tonnages between categories. In the Prime Minister's letter of June 29th<sup>1</sup> he came to a definite conclusion that, except in the cruiser category, it would not be wise to use the yardstick. We acquiesced in that decision, although obviously the use of the yardstick is limited thereby. We have made clear heretofore the simple character of the yardstick which has been suggested, and of its elements. As we have already pointed out, if these elements are agreed upon the only technical question remaining will be the values to be assigned these two elementary factors. Of course we might be quite wrong in thinking that it is possible to obtain agreement on this subject among all naval experts. From the Prime Minister's Paragraph (7) we received the impression that the naval experts with whom he has talked say very different things to him than experts say to us, and we cannot be sure just where the yardstick will lead, if finally agreed upon. What we wish to make clear is that the yardstick, this new suggested instrument of agreement, in order to fulfil the purpose of its genesis, cannot be allowed to be carried to such lengths as will make it difficult to be understood by the ordinary citizens of either America or Britain. In comparing the fleets the average citizen of our countries will always be guided largely by a quantitative basis. In all frankness, we do not believe the American public would ever accept such a ratio as the Prime Minister stated in his Paragraph (7); namely, 'that the 8-inch cruisers are worth in the event of a fight almost an infinity of smaller craft and guns'. We are advised by our experts, on the contrary, that inasmuch as the armour of an 8-inch cruiser is and must be necessarily penetrable by 6-inch guns the ratio of the respective fighting capacity of cruisers of these two classes, especially in fleet action, substantially reduces to the ratio of the destructive power of 8-inch guns, with their

<sup>1</sup> The American text here reads 'July 29'. The reference is to Mr. MacDonald's letter of July 30 (No. 26).

No. 33

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir E. Howard (Washington)*

*No. 392 Telegraphic [A 5486/30/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *August 20, 1929*

Your telegrams Nos. 368 and 369 (of August 16).<sup>1</sup>

Prime Minister doubts if agreement of definite character can be reached by end of next month owing to recent developments of American claims but is inclined to think that visit on its own merits might have a very beneficial effect on general relations and he would have to suit his public statements to the conditions. He would like your advice as quickly as possible. His stay in Washington could not exceed say 6 days as he ought to spend 3 in Canada.

He has booked cabins for September 28 provisionally and ought to be back in London during the last week in October.

<sup>1</sup> Nos. 30-1.

No. 34

*Sir E. Howard (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson*

*(Received August 22)*

*No. 377 Telegraphic [A 5566/30/45]*

WASHINGTON, *August 21, 1929*

Your telegram No. 392.<sup>1</sup>

I could not give reliable advice on the point desired by Prime Minister without consulting the Secretary of State or possibly the President. I therefore saw the former this morning and told him that the Prime Minister had informed me he thought even if some definite agreement could not be reached on all points before the end of September, visit would still have a very beneficial effect on relations of both countries. I said that this was also my view but that I hesitated to give advice on such an important matter without first consulting him. The Secretary of State said that he quite agreed that the visit would now be most beneficial and he telephoned later to say that President was of the same opinion. He went on to say while no answer had yet been received from Prime Minister to his last communication cabled to the United States Ambassador on August 12 or August 13, both he and President of the Republic confidently hoped that it went so far to meet the British point of view that all difficulties could be straightened before September 30. It was true he said that the arrangements contemplated would not permit so great a reduction of American cruisers if parity was to be established as had been desired by most radical supporters of disarmament (I suppose he referred to Borah) but the main thing would

<sup>1</sup> No. 33.

have been accomplished namely the disappearance of all suspicion of competition or armaments between the two countries, which had led to irritation and tension in the past. The acceptance of an agreement based on parity even if costing United States Government more than they wished would be worth it because it would create a state of mind that would prepare the way for further reductions later.

No. 35

*Letter from Mr. MacDonald to General Dawes*<sup>1</sup>

[A 5598/30/45]

My dear General Dawes,

LOSSIEMOUTH

I have now had time to study the note you sent to me on the 16th instant.<sup>2</sup> The delay has been caused by my having to consult some of my experts regarding the practical effect of certain proposals in it.

1. Once again I appreciate its frankness in dealing with our practical difficulties. I am a little disappointed by the indications in it that the Yardstick is not to make very much difference in the calculation of displacement tonnage which was the rock upon which the Geneva Conference foundered. We seem to be like the fox and the stork who invited each other to dinner which each served up in turn in utensils from which only one could eat. From the Yardstick with some reductions I hoped we could devise a vessel convenient for both.

2. As I should like that there should be no misunderstanding about what I wrote in my last about Japanese and American building, I shall repeat it. My argument was that though Great Britain is not likely to build against America, as all parties here are opposed to it, if America were to continue to build against us, you might put so many cruisers upon the sea that Japan might be forced to say that whatever ratio it had agreed to observe, that ratio had to be calculated in relation to the American fleet and not to ours. Only in this indirect way would American building effect British programmes, because we could not be indifferent to that.

<sup>1</sup> This letter is undated, but the date was subsequently confirmed by the Foreign Office as August 23.

<sup>2</sup> No. 32. Mr. MacDonald had discussed this note with General Dawes in Scotland and had promised a formal reply by August 22. Mr. MacDonald made a public statement on August 20 after his meeting with General Dawes. This statement, after referring to the scope of the discussions, concluded with the words: 'A wide conference—say, a resumption of the Washington Conference before the date now fixed for it—is at the back of our minds all the time.'

On August 22, however, Mr. MacDonald wrote an informal letter to General Dawes to the effect that he was depressed at the turn which the discussions were taking. It has not been possible to trace a copy of this letter in the British archives. The text of the letter is printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1929*, vol. i, p. 200.

On August 23 Mr. MacDonald again saw General Dawes. The letter of August 23 appears to have been written after this second meeting.

3. I fully understand the value of the word 'parity' in the minds of the American people, and I have made it clear that it raises no hostility in ours. I have also made it clear that the British standard must be determined by obligations which I have described, that my task is to value those obligations in terms of a fleet just sufficient to fulfil them, and that I regard that valuation as something which must fluctuate as peace conditions fluctuate. As the President knows, the present Government has already taken great strides forward in creating a machinery for making the Peace Pact effective. The Government's view is that as security by pacific means advances, so security, vainly sought by arms, will disappear.

4. I have looked ahead as far as 1936, and have proposed to arrange programmes of building so that, assuming an agreement with other Powers, the British fleet of cruisers all told will be 49 or 50 at the outside. These figures express the outlook of 1929. In the meantime, eyes will be kept open, and though I can make no promises, the President may be assured that any justification which may arise for carrying out a more effective peace programme will be used. Great Britain does not wish a useless or superfluous warship to sail the seas.

5. In the process of reducing we might agree to a lengthening of the life of cruisers so that the amount of rebuilding for displacement<sup>1</sup> would be reduced. As regards some ships rushed through the yards during the war, this might be awkward for us, as they are really not in good condition for much further sea service, but the problem they present need not obstruct an agreement.

6. As regards the wider agreement with other countries which we both contemplate I have already agreed to an understanding with Japan and us two, failing a satisfactory arrangement with France and Italy as well, and in that event I have proposed and you have agreed to a proviso that if either of the parties to the tripartite agreement find that that agreement is laying it open to danger, the agreement shall be subject to an arrangement which will enable the threatened signatory to make adequate provision for its safety. I agree to this only after every effort has been made to make the others reasonable, because the political effect of leaving them out might be uncomfortable and have naval reactions.

7. I threw out the suggestion that our visiting and police work might be done by a type of minor craft and that is being studied. Many points have to be considered, e.g. accommodation for crews, the arm needs of a police force, tropical conditions on board small craft, their Yardstick value, etc., and an answer to this cannot be hurried. For the moment, the idea had better be kept to provide a margin within which my actions may be better than my promises.

8. In all this, the Government must carry the Dominions with it.

9. Taking all these considerations into account, I am advised that the figures I gave in my last letter go right to the bone, and must be taken as the minimum to which the Government at present can commit itself.

<sup>1</sup> This word appears to be an error for 'replacement'.

10. For Great Britain, they are a considerable reduction on the Geneva figures and on the present fleet, and they are a still greater reduction in the programme of building announced two or three years ago. With this reduction we should be prepared to go to the Preparatory Commission on Disarmament and show that they would lead to a substantial reduction in world naval armaments if other countries would respond.

11. The note upon which I am commenting deals with the above proposals. If the United States puts equivalents on the water, I am told it means building, though considerably short of its full programme. I should like to meet the President in no niggardly or niggling way, but I really cannot go below minimum requirements under present conditions and the proposals I have indicated depend upon an agreement with the other Powers.

12. Parity, when all is said and done, must have some quantitative expression. The President may admit that the British fleet is constructed with no thought of the United States and that its minimum requirements are fixed for purposes which would be real even if no United States lay on the map of the world. He is nevertheless committed to parity and parity he must show. Parity with the British fleet is to him the same necessity as the work I have described is to me. There is no going beyond that. But I hoped that the Yardstick might have helped us to strip from our problem whatever is really non-essential in it. Your note tells me that no Yardstick would make a greater difference than 30,000 tons. That is not to be sneezed at but still it is disappointing as an equivalent for the numbers of small cruisers which we have to maintain not as possibilities for war but absolute necessities for peace. As possibilities for war a proportion of them would be scrapped tomorrow, as necessities for peace they are barely sufficient.

13. I do not forget that in the event of a war these cruisers would be turned from police to war purposes. But

- (a) We are both working unwearyingly to remove this possibility and I have always insisted that we must take a reasonable risk that the other fellow means to honour his signature.
- (b) As fighting vessels the smaller cruiser is on a much lower plane than the larger. If your Board of Admiralty were to go to sea with small cruisers to meet an enemy of large cruisers how many of the former would they want in proportion to the larger to give them a dog's chance of victory?

The experts in naval matters whom I have consulted and have shown the observations in your note reply in writing: 'These arguments are clearly without any foundation having regard to the experience of the War.'

14. To sum up, the actual questions which we have brought ourselves to face are:

- (a) Can the United States accommodate itself either by building and/or by a yardstick to our minimum and what, in an actual quantitative programme, does it mean especially in the category of Cruisers?

(b) Can we agree to a programme of lengthening years and replacement which would put us in a position mutually satisfactory in 1936?

15. Upon (b) it appears that we can come to an agreement quite easily. The difficulty is in (a).

16. I have put the proposals and comments of your note into a table so that we may see how we stand. This is the result in terms of the 1936 standard:

				8-inch cruisers	Omahas	6-inch cruisers
Great Britain	.	.	.	15	..	35
United States	.	.	.	23	10	..

A superiority of eight 8-inch cruisers is an impossible proposition to take to our people labelled 'parity', especially supported by 10 ships of your *Omaha* calibre and efficiency, our 15 being supported by thirty-five 6-inch ships. We might go to the country and say that we have found it impossible to agree and that the United States is to build such and such a programme, and we might advise that our own programme should make no response. But to say that we accept this table as parity would make people turn and rend us. An agreed parity must commend itself to our people as well as to those of the United States.

17. I have been working upon the prospects held out at Geneva. My papers record that on the 23rd April, Mr. Gibson informed our delegate at Geneva that the plan then suggested would give the American navy superiority over the British of one or two 10,000-ton 8-inch cruisers and give the British navy superiority over America of some thirty 6,400-ton 6-inch cruisers.<sup>1</sup> That I have met generously and the margin of strength shown in the suggestions I have made is less than in that estimate, but even as a basis of discussion it has now been completely departed from in your last note, and we are back to all intents and purposes upon dead as against effective tonnage, with results shown in the above table. This is the Geneva deadlock.

18. Furthermore, during our conversation of the 17th June you told me that as soon as the Government at Washington had made up its mind about the Yardstick formula at which it was working, it would be communicated to His Majesty's Government in confidence. Now, without any indication of what the formula is, this note informs me that it provides for a margin of only 30,000 tons, e.g. 8 extra 8-inch cruisers and 10 *Omaha* calibres only add one-tenth to the effective strength of the U.S. cruisers in comparison with ours. Surely on the face of it there is something wrong in such a calculation. I should like to see the formula which gives that result. Surely we ought to exchange views upon it before we declare its influence in determining, for one of us, a decision regarding parity standards. Could I not see the formula in order to study it and comment upon it?

19. I am getting disturbed about my visit to America. I see in this one of the most beneficial moves that could be made in the present state of the

<sup>1</sup> On August 26 Mr. MacDonald wrote to General Dawes that he (Mr. MacDonald) had not made it sufficiently clear that Mr. Gibson's figures were neither 'official' nor 'binding in any way on the American Government'.

world. Everyone with a vision must see that the demonstration of our two countries standing side by side for fellowship and peace will greatly move the world, whereas the abandonment of the visit or its postponement till next year will have a correspondingly depressing effect. But the House of Commons meets at the end of October and I cannot be absent beyond say the first week of the Session. What is done must be done quickly. On Saturday week I go to Geneva, and for the 28th September I have a call upon steamer accommodation for New York.

With all my best wishes, etc.

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD

### No. 36

*Memorandum by Mr. Craigie on a conversation with Mr. Belin<sup>1</sup>*

[A 5646/30/45]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *August 26, 1929*

On the Prime Minister's instructions I saw Mr. Belin this afternoon.

I said that I had just seen the Prime Minister and had found him as determined as ever to reach an agreement on the naval question and to overcome the difficulties that had occurred. One point was, however, preoccupying him, and I was not sure whether the United States Government fully appreciated this particular difficulty: the Prime Minister was leaving for Geneva on Thursday,<sup>2</sup> and there would undoubtedly be great expectations that he would be able to make a satisfactory and reasonably definite announcement in regard to the progress of the Anglo-American conversations. If this were not possible we might be faced with an insistent demand that the calling of the next meeting of the Preparatory Commission should be no longer deferred. Even if the disappointment of those interested in disarmament did not take this form, there could be no doubt that both Great Britain and the United States would be subjected to considerable criticism for the delay which had occurred in negotiations which had not yet even reached the stage at which the other naval Powers could be called in. From every point of view it was very important at the present juncture to make a further step in advance if possible. I felt sure that these considerations would carry weight with the United States Government and that every effort would be made to hasten their reply to the Prime Minister's letter of the 23rd instant. I added that possibly the American Embassy might think it worth while to say something in the above sense to the United States Government.

Mr. Belin fully understood the point and said he would suggest to the Ambassador that a telegram in this sense should be sent to-night.

Mr. Belin, speaking unofficially, then said he could not help feeling disappointed in the last communications from this side, and he seemed

<sup>1</sup> First Secretary at the United States Embassy.

<sup>2</sup> August 29.



apprehensive as to how the negotiations would now proceed. He appeared particularly taken aback at the firmness with which the Prime Minister had rejected the possibility of a yardstick which would give the United States an excess of eight 8-inch gun cruisers to compensate for our excess of twenty-five 6-inch gun cruisers. I said that public opinion here could never be brought to believe that such a balance constituted parity, and went on to speak of the enormous power of the 8-inch gun cruiser. The bursting power of the 8-inch gun shell was, I understood, somewhere between six and seven times as great as that of the 6-inch gun shell: this was a matter of fact as to which there could be no controversy between experts, and showed clearly, I thought, the desirability of our getting down to the consideration of the American yardstick at the earliest possible moment. Mr. Belin then said, still speaking unofficially, that he believed that in certain American quarters the idea of a simultaneous exchange of American and British yardsticks was favoured. Could I give him any information in regard to results in terms of ships to which the British Admiralty's yardstick was likely to lead? He added that if anything were to be achieved before next Thursday it seemed important that information on the above point should be telegraphed to Washington at once.

In reply I regretted that I had not the necessary information to answer his question: we had been awaiting the receipt of the American yardstick since last May, and it still seemed to us preferable that this should be communicated to us first as originally intended. Mr. Belin then observed that the point was this: if we considered twenty-three American 8-inch gun cruisers to fifteen British 8-inch gun cruisers to be altogether excessive as a makeweight to the proposed British excess of twenty-five 6-inch gun cruisers, what excess of 8-inch gun cruisers *did* we think would be reasonable? As I was unable to answer this Mr. Belin said: 'Supposing, for instance, we had eighteen 8-inch gun cruisers and ten *Omahas*, and you had fifteen 8-inch gun cruisers and thirty-five 6-inch gun cruisers, would you consider that to be a reasonable balance?' I said I had no authority to answer that question but, speaking quite unofficially, I thought that something in this neighbourhood might be considered reasonable here. To this Mr. Belin replied that the difficulty was that the American Navy Board considered a proportion of eight 6-inch gun cruisers to three 8-inch gun cruisers to be altogether excessive: he felt, however, that matters would be greatly facilitated for Mr. Hoover if we could inform the President at this stage what our Admiralty considered (in a general way) to be a reasonable balance between the two types of cruiser.

Mr. Belin next enquired whether it might not be possible for the present British minimum of 330,000 tons to be still further reduced if at the Five-Power Conference it was found that the other four Powers were prepared to reduce even below the levels which would be established—according to the Washington ratios—by this British minimum. I said that personally I did not think there was any prospect at all of this: our Admiralty had agreed to reduce from their existing programme of sixty-three cruisers to a figure

of fifty cruisers—surely a very considerable contribution to the first agreement on cruiser strengths. I could not help thinking that the United States Government would, if they pressed us still further on this point, be making the same mistake that the Germans and Russians so constantly make at Geneva, namely, demanding that disarmament should take place at one fell swoop instead of by progressive stages, the latter method being far less likely to create a sense of insecurity in the minds of the disarming nations. We had made a real concession in reducing our minimum to fifty, and I was so far unable to detect any corresponding concession on America's side—for it was impossible to regard such glimpses of their yardstick as had been vouchsafed to us as a 'concession'.

At one point in our conversation when I had been referring to the contrast between the existing state of affairs and the rosy prospect held out to us at Geneva last May, Mr. Belin made the significant confession that he himself had been somewhat disappointed as to the dimensions of the American yardstick, adding that it looked as if it were dwindling from a 'yardstick' to a 'footrule'.

R. L. CRAIGIE

### No. 37

*Memorandum<sup>1</sup> from General Dawes to Mr. MacDonald*

[A 5739/30/45]

LONDON, August 29, 1929

The following is our reply to your telegrams 242 of August 24th, quoting the Prime Minister's letter of August 23rd and your 245 of August 27th;<sup>2</sup>

While we are despatching a separate telegram from which it appears to us that agreement might be found, we deem it essential to answer the Prime Minister's letter quoted in your 242 in detail. In that letter we believe him to be in error, which errors we believe underlie some of the conclusions therein and we do not consider that our separate message mentioned above will lead to results unless those errors are dispelled.

The Prime Minister assumes in his letter that it would be fair to class the four cruisers of the *Hawkins* type with the 6-inch cruisers. We have not agreed and do not agree with that conclusion. The Prime Minister referred to this type, in his letter quoted in your telegram No. 204 of July 25th, as a group laid down in 1916 for war purposes. These vessels, according to our information, were completed in 1918, 1919, 1924 and 1925 respectively. Their armament is 7½-inch, which is obviously much nearer 8-inch than

<sup>1</sup> This memorandum, and the two following documents (Nos. 38 and 39), consisted of telegrams of August 28 from Mr. Stimson to General Dawes. The three documents were communicated to Mr. MacDonald on August 29. These telegrams are printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1929*, vol. i, pp. 203-10.

<sup>2</sup> This telegram reported Mr. MacDonald's letter of August 23 (No. 35).

6-inch. The guns, the Prime Minister states, are hand worked, which seems to us should give advantage in rapidity of fire. The 200-pound projectile of these vessels is certainly much nearer to the 250-pound 8-inch projectile than it is to the 105-pound projectile of the 6-inch type. Our advisers look upon the four cruisers of the *Hawkins* type of about 40,000 tons as substantially comparable to four 8-inch cruisers of 40,000 tons, and we do not understand how the Prime Minister or his advisers can consider the *Hawkins* type nearer to the modern 6-inch cruiser than to the 3-inch type. In comparing the four *Hawkins* cruisers with 8-inch cruisers, of course some deductions in favor of the *Hawkins* type would have to be made in respect to age and some minor discount for guns, but even so we are of the opinion that the *Hawkins* cruisers would remain well within comparative range of four cruisers of the 8-inch type.

The Prime Minister states (your telegram 242) that Great Britain has no craft of the *Omaha* type in the British fleet. We do not see why the *Emerald* and the *Enterprise* are not at least equivalent to two of the *Omaha* type of cruiser, being each of more than 7,500 standard tons.

The Prime Minister will see, if he will take these facts into consideration, that Great Britain has more large cruiser units than stated by him. We believe that he should, instead of figuring his large cruiser units at 15, consider them more nearly at 19. The disparity in large cruisers, considered separately, would thus be made very much less than his letter asserts. Even should the United States complete its full program of 23 cruisers, the Prime Minister will find, if he will go through the two cruiser fleets matching off the substantial equivalent units, that, matching off the four *Hawkins* type cruisers against their equivalent in 8-inch, 10,000-ton cruisers as above stated; the *Enterprise* and the *Emerald* against two of the *Omaha* type, as above stated; of the fleet of the United States as of 1936 there will remain approximately eight of the *Omaha* class and four 8-inch cruisers, a total of approximately 12 units, to be evaluated as against twenty-nine 6-inch units in the fleet of Great Britain. We do not as yet know the displacement tonnage of these 29 British units, but it will be about one and one-third times as great as that of the twelve units of the United States fleet. That is a reasonable way to test whether the result of a yardstick is or is not reasonably fair. The point which we are now emphasizing is that the disparity deplored by the Prime Minister does not exist and that our statement that to reach parity we should have to build our full program was not an unfair statement. As to whether it is or is not correct is a question of fact on which reasonable men should not differ very materially after conference and discussion. Nor do we understand why great difficulty in believing in a parity now reached should be experienced by the public or Admiralty of either country.

The Prime Minister did not furnish us, in your telegram 242, with the details of the replacements he wishes to make, as to armaments or tonnage, as specifically requested by us, and the figures given above are based on the assumption that his proposed replacements are all 4,000-ton cruisers of

a type substantially equal to the old cruisers and are as stated in your telegram No. 228 of August 9th.<sup>1</sup>

With reference to the Prime Minister's paragraph (2) in his letter quoted in your 242, we are quite in agreement that full consideration must be given Japan. We can only make suggestions for a program dependent upon Japan's acquiescence. In our telegram 217<sup>2</sup> we were quite clear on that point.

Reference paragraph (3) of the Prime Minister's letter: Providing it is consistent with a displacement tonnage of 330,000 tons, we have not objected to the determination by Great Britain of cruiser parity at 50 units.

We are in agreement with the Prime Minister on his paragraph (4).

With reference to his paragraph (5) we are not certain that we understand. We agree if he suggests that, in the event there are any British or American cruisers which would become twenty years old prior to 1936, such vessels may be kept alive and not replaced, with the proviso that the amount of rebuilding for replacement before 1936 would be *pro tanto* reduced, but we are not certain that this is what he means. If he means, however, that the cruisers which would before 1936 become obsolete are to be kept alive and that nevertheless his replacement vessels for such obsolete cruisers should be built, obviously we do not agree to that, since it would merely mean making for Great Britain so much additional tonnage.

We are in agreement with his paragraph (6).

Referring to his paragraph (7), we trust he will reconsider his feeling that the idea of minor craft for police work had better be kept to provide a margin within which his actions may be better than his promises. The present building program would be shortened *pro tanto* and we would be reduced from twenty-three 8-inch units to 21 and the apparent disparity which he feels in the large cruiser units would be lessened, if he could bring himself to agree to make in such craft even 20,000 tons of his replacements prior to 1936.

As regards his paragraph (8), it is quite clear to us that practically he is restricted in his promises by the necessity of carrying with him his Dominions.

We are willing to accept the statement in paragraph (9) of his last letter that he is cutting 'right to the bone' British unit needs. We believe that he is in a better position than we are to know how far he can go, and therefore we accept his statement. We point out to him, however, that he did not attempt, in his last letter, to limit himself at all as to his replacement tonnage and that our inquiries in that respect have not yet been answered.

We are in agreement with his paragraph (10).

We agree with his paragraph (11), as we understand it.

We note the disappointment he expresses in his paragraph (12), and have endeavoured to express our comprehension and our sympathy with his point of view that a large number of his cruiser fleet are necessities for peace. We quite understand that many of such craft will be near the scrapping age in 1936.

<sup>1</sup> This telegram reported Mr. MacDonald's letter of August 8 (No. 28).

<sup>2</sup> No. 32.

We are not in agreement, as at present advised, with the sentiments expressed in Subsection (b) of his paragraph (13). We are willing, however, to go to a consultation ready to be convinced if the facts convince us that we are wrong. We suggest to him that the gloomy conclusion he draws does not necessarily follow an examination of the data regarding the two fleets.

It was our intention, in our telegram 217, to answer fully Subsection (a) of his paragraph (14). We have already answered above his Subsection (b), and we have likewise replied to his paragraph (15).

In our opinion the Prime Minister is mistaken in his paragraph (16) and we suggest to him that his view of the respective cruiser fleets is, as stated above, based upon a misunderstanding as to them. We suggest that there is no superiority of eight 8-inch cruisers to be taken to his people labeled parity.

We are in heartfelt agreement with what the Prime Minister says in his paragraph (19) as to the importance of his visit. It is for that reason, largely, that we are so insistent upon the imperative importance, before he visits the United States, of reaching in these conversations the certainty of an agreement with the British Government. If such an agreement were assured that any real danger of subsequent backsliding is precluded, it not only will be the foundation upon which the other beneficial results from his visit can be constructed, but it substantially insures that in the eventual Naval Conference no disappointment can occur which might otherwise endanger the results of his visit as an anti-climax. The inevitable difficulties which will arise in that Naval Conference from the presence of other nations can be faced by us with equanimity if we have our two Governments in clear agreement on the questions which we have been discussing. These outside complications conceivably might well render the Conference abortive, in the absence of such an agreement, and practically nullify in that way the benefits which would otherwise result from the visit of the Prime Minister and his conversations with the President in Washington. The Prime Minister will not, we feel sure, misunderstand the stress which we lay upon the importance of a precise agreement between our two countries. The experience we have had in these very conversations seems to us proof of the point just made. The danger of leaving to the uncertainties of a larger Conference the solution of such problems is emphasized by the fact that negotiators who have approached this subject with the admitted enthusiasm and common purposes with which both parties to these conversations have been actuated can find it so difficult as we have found it to work out the details of the cruiser problems of only two nations.

There remains now, as we survey our present situation, only one of these details upon which we need assurance, and that is the precise tonnage on December 31, 1936, of the fifty British cruiser units, including the replacements suggested by the Prime Minister. As we have stated above, we feel that we could go into a Conference if this figure can be given us and if it does not differ from our anticipation of it, 330,000 displacement tons, as stated in our telegram No. 217.

*Memorandum<sup>1</sup> from General Dawes to Mr. MacDonald*

[A 5741/30/45]

LONDON, August 29, 1929

In endeavouring to meet the whole situation the following review of our points of agreement is sent you, some of them being slightly changed in phraseology for the purpose of meeting our general discussions, with additional clauses which, if the Prime Minister agrees, may cover the whole of the questions prior to the General Conference. This Memorandum is also sent with the object of simplifying our entire discussion.

First. These negotiations result from the Pact for the Renunciation of War, as well as from the consequent realignment of various national attitudes to the position that armaments may not be used, in the relations of nations one with the other, as an instrument of national policy; the starting-point of agreement, therefore, must be taken from the Pact.

Second. Parity in combatant strength of the respective navies is agreed on.

Third. That this parity shall be separately by categories of capital ships, aircraft carriers, destroyers, cruisers, and submarines, is also agreed to.

Fourth. December 31st, 1936, shall be considered by us as the date on which parity shall be reached between the fleets of Great Britain and America.

Fifth. Since the ratio of capital ships and aircraft carriers has been fixed by the Washington Treaty to that date we shall not disturb the provisions of that Treaty except that, with the view of diminishing the amount of replacement construction implied under that Treaty, we shall reconsider its replacement programmes.

Sixth. We agree, as to submarines, to the principle of total abolition in international war, although we realize that to secure the consent of other nations to this proposal may be impossible.

Seventh. We agree upon reduction of the present aggregate tonnages of submarines and destroyers and the limitation of future construction. We also agree that parity in standard tonnage be reached by 31st December, 1936, in each of these two categories, either by scrapping, obsolescence, or, as may be required to reach parity, construction by either nation. America may retain submarines and destroyers temporarily in excess of the point of parity agreed upon, and after the age of obsolescence, during such period prior to 1936 as tonnages in the cruiser category are retained by Great Britain beyond parity.

Eighth. We agree, as to cruisers, that a yardstick shall be adopted by which the comparative value of vessels in the cruiser category shall be measured. The principle is agreed to that a new 10,000 standard ton 8-inch gun cruiser shall be the basis for this yardstick, and the relative comparative strength of inferior cruisers shall be determined by consideration of age,

<sup>1</sup> See p. 53, No. 37, note 1.

guns, and displacement. No other elements are to be considered as they are relative to the factors mentioned above.

Ninth. All of the Governments signatory to the Washington Treaty shall be requested to formulate their views of the yardstick, which is to be applied under the principles set out in paragraph eight above, for submission to the proposed Conference.

Tenth. The following ages for scrapping of ships are agreed to: destroyers, sixteen years; submarines, thirteen years; and cruisers, twenty years. Vessels are to be scrapped forthwith when the scrapping age is reached, except that as an alternative to permitted replacement, vessels may be retained beyond the scrapping age, and except as set forth in paragraph seven above.

Eleventh. By 31st December, 1936, the cruiser strength of Great Britain shall be reduced to 50 units with a total displacement tonnage of not to exceed standard tons 330,000. 15 of the 50 units shall be 8-inch cruisers aggregating standard tons 146,800; 4 of them shall be 7.5-inch gun cruisers with an aggregate tonnage of 39,400; and the balance, 31, are to be 6-inch gun cruisers with an aggregate tonnage of 143,774, of which not more than 7, all with 6-inch guns, are to be built prior to 1936.

Twelfth. The cruiser strength of the United States is to be brought to parity with the cruiser strength of Great Britain, as above stated, taking into account the effect upon the navies of the two countries of the displacement, guns and age as evaluated by the yardstick.

Thirteenth. At the Conference consideration will be given to confining some proportion of new cruiser construction to peace time police cruiser type of slow speed and limited armament.

Fourteenth. At the Conference any agreement to be reached is to contain a provision that it is open to reconsideration by any of the parties should any non-signatory Power inaugurate a menacing building program.

Fifteenth. The British Government is to call a Conference of the five Powers to take place early in December, 1929, in London.

Sixteenth. The proposal will be made to the other naval Powers signatory to the Washington Treaty that this Conference is to become the Conference which the Washington Treaty provided was to be called in 1931.

### No. 39

*Memorandum<sup>1</sup> from General Dawes to Mr. MacDonald*

[A 5740/30/45]

LONDON, August 29, 1929

Your No. 242.

The yardstick has not been produced hitherto for the inspection of the Prime Minister nor have we suggested an immediate agreement of such a yardstick although the elements thereof have been made clear by us, that

<sup>1</sup> See p. 53, No. 37, note 1.

is, the elements which we believe should enter into it and thus its general nature is known to Mr. MacDonald. In our opinion this is as far as we should go in these preliminary conversations between Great Britain and the United States. We believe that at this moment it would be unwise for our two Governments to actually attempt to agree upon the details of such a yardstick. The following are our reasons for this:

(1) Between the naval experts of the two countries there may be divergences of view as the result of which we may become involved in prolonged mathematical discussions of a highly technical order as the yardstick involves formulae very complicated of approach.

(2) In the two-country conversations the yardstick is the only point which would directly affect other countries' interests and we think it hardly fair to agree upon the yardstick without other countries being kept informed. As a matter of fact, their representatives have been told by us, in answer to their enquiries, that as soon as we gave the yardstick to anybody we would give it to them.

(3) Should we do this it is inevitable that the yardstick would become public and inevitably then there would also arise public discussion, and undoubtedly in the press, violent controversy which would becloud all the matters vastly more important upon which agreement has already been reached, and it would render a final agreement much more difficult in the conference to be held subsequently.

We sincerely hope, for these reasons, that the Prime Minister will be willing not to press his request for the mathematical formulae of the American yardstick but will be willing to leave the matter to be considered at the conference. As, however, we desire to keep Mr. MacDonald informed fully and to be absolutely frank with him, we give therefore the results of our yardstick as it applies to the two fleets as follows:

From the 330,000 tons fifty ship British fleet, as of 31 December 1936, our yardstick gives a discount of 65,000 tons approximately, and from the contemplated American fleet of 300,000 tons comprising ten *Omahas* and twenty-three 10,000-ton 8-inch units, a discount of 23,000 tons approximately. Or stating it differently, the yardstick permits the shortening of the American program by at least one 8-inch ship of 10,000 tons.

STIMSON

#### No. 40

*Letter from Mr. MacDonald to General Dawes*

[A 5741/30/45]

My dear General Dawes,

August 30, 1929

I am enclosing you herewith my comments<sup>1</sup> upon the document, which, I repeat, is a very valuable one, presented to me last night in the form of a draft agreement.

<sup>1</sup> No. 41.



We are all determined to bring something out of these conversations and to do it by the beginning of next week. But in our desire to do so, we may make the mistake of committing ourselves to general statements which cover unsolved problems that, when we face them, may wreck the further stages of our agreements. That is why those of us who met today to consider the agreement felt that it was necessary to press for a little more definiteness regarding the parity programme of the United States. We cannot afford to go into the Five Power Conference with major difficulties between ourselves unsettled. If the figures could be supplied from your side in the same measure of detail as you have inserted for us in your paragraph 11, I would not suggest that either paragraph 11 or 12 would, at the moment, be published. It would be an agreement between ourselves which would guide us in our action at the Five Power Conference. Only if we have those figures in our possession can we bring the persuasion and the pressure to bear upon the other Powers which we must do if the Conference is to be a real success from the point of view of Disarmament. If the President could meet us on this and the other points, we could still close not later than Monday evening.<sup>1</sup>

I am very sorry about the 9,000 tons which I have had to add to the 330,000 which has been the hypothetical figure appearing in your notes. I strove hard to get it undisturbed, and we worked out tonnages and units in every possible way to enable us to accept it without any alteration. The hard unfortunate thing however is, as I have stated in the note accompanying this—there is not a single naval Power building on what you have assumed to be a possible 6-inch cruiser standard tonnage. You will recognise that I am up once again, not against you at all, but against the rest of the world minus you. I need only add that the reason why I did not give you tonnage before was that my last note was written from Lossiemouth where I could not get the advice that was necessary nor, indeed, the figures themselves. If we can be met now on this note, I can agree without any further reference to anybody.

I should like to explain a little more than has been done in the accompanying note what has been the result of our very thorough examination of the American proposal that for our fifteen 8-inch cruisers you should have 23. The ratio 5:5:3.5 which Japan asks<sup>2</sup> for would mean that in relation to the 23 Japan could build 16, which would be one of a superiority<sup>3</sup> over us. If you fixed your 8-inch cruisers at 20, the ratio would mean that Japan could build 14. I am perfectly certain that the Dominions would reject any agreement upon that basis. If, on the other hand, you made it 18 for you, Japan could build 12.6, which would be 13. In order to get a settlement we might get Japan to accept 12, and to that we would agree.

<sup>1</sup> September 2.

<sup>2</sup> On August 27 the Japanese Ambassador informed Mr. MacDonald that Japan would claim a ratio of 5:5:3.5 in ships below the category of first-class battleship. Public statements to this effect had already been made by the Japanese Minister of the Navy.

<sup>3</sup> The text here should probably read 'a superiority of one'.

Even supposing we got Japan to be content with a cruiser ratio of 5 : 5 : 3 on an American strength of 23, that would mean a Japanese building of 14—at least 2 more than there is any chance of our getting our Dominions to agree to.

One very important result of an agreement which would enable Japan and ourselves to fix our actual units at 12 and 15 is that neither of our countries until replacement is necessary would have to build any more 8-inch cruisers.

I should be glad if you would treat this letter as for the information of the American Government only.

I am, etc.,

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD

No. 41

*Letter from Mr. MacDonald to General Dawes*

[A 5741/30/45]

My dear General Dawes,

August 30, 1929

I have had a very prolonged discussion today on the three Notes you left with me last night and regret exceedingly that I found I could not carry out the promise I made to you to let you have my reply by about tea-time. As a matter of fact some extraordinarily difficult points are involved in the draft of the memorandum of agreement. I had better go through it paragraph by paragraph:—

Paragraph 1. I agree.

Paragraph 2. I agree.

Paragraph 3. I agree.

Paragraph 4. I agree.

Paragraph 5. I agree.

Paragraph 6. I agree; though I think the final word might be 'difficult' instead of 'impossible'.

Paragraph 7. I agree.

Paragraph 8. You told me last night that you were to urge that that should go out for the purpose of eliminating from the memorandum all references to a Yardstick. If the President agrees to that, I shall agree. If he does not and this paragraph is retained, I agree.

Paragraph 9. I hope that this paragraph in any event will be deleted. If it remains in, it will mean that any agreement we may come to will run the risk of being completely upset by a Yardstick constructed primarily not to meet our mutual requirements but requirements of a nature so different from ours as to call for a totally different Yardstick.

Paragraph 10. We agree, but the wording would be influenced by paragraph 11 which I propose to alter as underneath. If the alteration were agreed to the following words would require to be added to paragraph 10:

'and paragraph 11 below', because we are contemplating some premature scrapping in order to make this agreement easier to come to.

Paragraph 11. This paragraph read with your accompanying note assumes that the new 6-inch cruisers will be of a standard tonnage of 4,000 each. A consideration of this point has been one of the causes of the prolonged examination which I have had to give to your note. I find that today no naval Power is building a 4,000 standard ton 6-inch cruiser, and therefore unless we could get the other Powers to use a percentage of the tonnage available for 6-inch cruisers for the construction of 4,000 ton cruisers, it would be impossible for us to build such a ship.

In one of the notes accompanying the draft agreement, you assume that in 1936 we shall still have our 4 ships of the *Hawkins* type in commission. As you will remember, I have repeatedly said that I was willing to scrap these prematurely in order that this problem of distribution of tonnage within the cruiser category might be simplified. I repeat that I am willing to include that scrapping in the provisions of this agreement. The position regarding the provisions of paragraph 11 therefore is as follows: -

I agree to 50 units in the category, but as you have assumed a 4,000 tonnage for each 6-inch cruiser to be built, and I find that to be quite impracticable, your 330,000 maximum requires to be slightly expanded.

We have worked at this very carefully with the determination to reduce it to its very minimum but it cannot be brought below 339,000.

As regards the fifteen 8-inch units I agree.

As regards the four 7.5-inch gun cruisers, they will have disappeared before the end of 1936.

As regards the remainder of the paragraph, it would then be worded as follows:

'Of the balance of 35 14 will be 6-inch replacement construction aggregating 91,000 tons, and 21 will be existing older 6-inch cruisers aggregating 101,200 tons, the following ships having been scrapped in the interval, i.e. before 31st December 1936:

4 *Hawkins* class aggregating 39,400 tons.

18 old 6-inch cruisers aggregating 76,200 tons, the total tonnage scrapped being 115,600, showing a net reduction of 24,600 tons.

Paragraph 12: The effect of this has also been the subject of very prolonged consideration. Were I to agree to it as it is drafted, it would mean that we should go into the Five Power Conference with no agreed standard of American strength and I think you will agree that that would place our representatives in a very awkward position. It might indeed not only render the Five Power Conference abortive but would throw our two countries back into a state of having no agreement at all. Supposing, for instance, you found that you could not reduce your 8-inch units below 23 and that one or other of the other Governments insisted upon using that figure for the purpose of calculating what number of units it could build upon a ratio agreed to, the British Government might then be faced with a situation which meant that in terms of ships it would have to accept not the ratio

agreed to but equality. Then we should have to increase our 15 and that in turn would upset your 23, and with that would go the whole of our agreement.

We have tried every way we could conceive of getting round the difficulty and we have been unable to find one. I would therefore urge you to make this paragraph a definite statement of your conception of parity in units. If we cannot come to an agreement upon this now it only means that we postpone it and face failure in a few months.

In the note commenting upon the Yardstick you come to the conclusion that the Yardstick on certain figures 'permits the shortening of the American programme by at least one 8-inch ship of 10,000 tons'. If I have followed the figures discussed in the longer memorandum which replies in detail to my last note, the difference between us even on your own calculation is practically equal to two 8-inch cruisers, bringing your figure of 23 down to 21. In addition to that, in the figures upon which you base your calculation is included the group of 4 *Hawkins* bearing a specially high valuation—in your own words, used in the note in front of me, August 29th, 'We are of the opinion that the *Hawkins* cruisers would remain well within comparative range of 4 cruisers of the 8-inch type'; or, again, a few lines earlier in the same paragraph—'Our advisers look upon the 4 cruisers of the *Hawkins* type of 40,000 tons as substantially comparable to four 8-inch cruisers of the 10,000 type'. As I say, we propose to scrap these and to replace them by 6-inch vessels, the tonnage of which is included in our 339,000 figure.

Paragraph 13: This paragraph commits us to considering the question of the police cruiser. I would go further and say that I should consider it with great sincerity, but it must be understood that tonnage could not be used for this unless we could get an agreement from the Five Power Conference. In that consideration, there would have to be taken into account the points mentioned in my last note under this heading.

Paragraph 14. I agree.

Paragraph 15. I agree.

Paragraph 16. I agree.

I am sorry for the delay but it could not be helped.

Yours very sincerely,

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD

## No. 42

*Memorandum by Mr. MacDonald of a conversation with the  
Japanese Ambassador*

[A 5874/30/45]

GENEVA, September 2, 1929

I saw the Japanese Ambassador this morning at 10 o'clock. He said he wished to speak to me about the negotiations with America, as he understood

from General Dawes that I had had a despatch from President Hoover which terminated the conversations.

I informed him that that was not so and that I did not expect to get an answer to my last communication to General Dawes until next Wednesday<sup>1</sup> and that it might not be final.

I said to him that I should like to ask him something to which perhaps he was not at the moment prepared to give an answer: namely, whether supposing for the sake of coming to an agreement we were to allow the Americans a superiority in 8-inch cruisers, would the Japanese ratio of, say, 5 : 5 : 3 or 5 : 5 : 3·5 apply to the American number or to ours? I pointed out that quite obviously if it applied to the Americans it might mean that Japan would have a number of 8-inch cruisers which would completely upset the naval balance which at the moment is so satisfactory to everybody concerned. He informed me right away that Japan would build on the American figures so far as 8-inch cruisers were concerned and also on the American figures of *Omahas* and lighter cruisers. He pressed me on the point and said that even if Japan had a larger ratio in 8-inch cruisers as regards our programme, might we not agree? I gave him quite distinctly to understand that that would be impossible. He pointed out that they had some cruisers of the *Hawkins* type and said that they might be willing to regard them as 8-inch cruisers. I told him that we had up to now confined ourselves exclusively to the possibility of an arrangement with America and that, in view of the consequential results affecting other countries' building programmes, and also to carry out our strong desire to come to no conclusions regarding other countries until these other countries met us in conference, we had made it perfectly clear to each other that an agreement between America and ourselves would be provisional and have to depend upon the results of the Five Power Conference. I would therefore prefer not to carry the discussion further at present. I only wished to ask him if he could tell me to whose building his ratio would apply and was willing further to tell him that I could not agree to what he said about his own cruiser programme but that we should discuss it later.

He appeared to be perfectly satisfied, but he evidently wishes that we should talk business with him as soon as possible. I told him that immediately America and ourselves came to any agreement it would be communicated to the interested Powers and that the next stage, namely the Five Power Conference, would be at once prepared for. When that happened, of course, we should be prepared to take steps to remove any preliminary doubts and difficulties with Japan and with the other Powers involved in the Five Power Conference.

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD

<sup>1</sup> September 4.

No. 43

*Sir E. Howard (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson*  
(Received September 4)

*No. 407 Telegraphic [A 5909/30/45]*

WASHINGTON, *September 4, 1929*

Following from Vansittart:<sup>1</sup>

Your telegram No. 425.<sup>2</sup>

With regard to paragraph 7 could you tell me for my own information by tomorrow what specific minimum reduction you have in mind when you 'expressed hope that this will enable United States Government further to reduce etc.'

I am seeing both the President and Secretary of State tomorrow morning and will then telegraph (see Prime Minister's message to me in Private Secretary's telegram of August 28<sup>3</sup>).

<sup>1</sup> Sir R. Vansittart was in the United States on a private visit.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed. This telegram summarized, for Sir E. Howard's information, the course of the discussions between His Majesty's Government and the United States Government.

<sup>3</sup> This telegram cannot be traced in the Foreign Office archives.

No. 44

*Mr. A. Henderson to Mr. Patteson (Geneva)*

*No. 104 Telegraphic [A 5892/30/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 4, 1929*

Following for Prime Minister:

United States Embassy have informed us orally of the receipt of a telegram to-day from the Department of State to the effect that proposals contained in the Prime Minister's letters to General Dawes of August 30 can only be dealt with after a thorough consultation with the General Board of the United States Navy, involving entire reconsideration of the problem. This consultation will take at least a week and consequently State Department declare that it is out of the question for them to furnish the United States Ambassador with any reply which can be made the basis of a public statement at Geneva. The State Department hope that in these circumstances no statement will be made as this might lead to false hopes and thereby make their difficulties greater in any ultimate conference.

In communicating the above Mr. Atherton added that he had been instructed by General Dawes to say that His Excellency would make no further move in regard to the question of naval disarmament until he received a week or so hence the detailed views of the United States Government.

No. 45

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir E. Howard (Washington)*

*No. 431 Telegraphic [A 5909/30/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 5, 1929*

Your telegram No. 407<sup>1</sup> (of September 4,—Naval disarmament).

Following for Sir R. Vansittart begins:—

As Prime Minister is still at Geneva, we have no time in which to consult him. The following extract from one of the two letters addressed by him to General Dawes of August 30 affords, however, an indication of what he had in mind in regard to United States 10,000 ton 8-inch cruiser strength:

'I should like to explain a little more than has been done in the accompanying note what has been the result of our very thorough examination of the American proposal that for our fifteen 8-inch cruisers you should have twenty-three. The ratio 5 : 5 : 3·5 which Japan asks for would mean that in relation to the twenty-three Japan could build sixteen, which would be one of a superiority over us.<sup>2</sup> If you fixed your 8-inch cruisers at twenty, the ratio would mean that Japan could build fourteen. I am perfectly certain that the Dominions would reject any agreement upon that basis. If, on the other hand, you made it eighteen for you, Japan could build 12·6, which would be thirteen. In order to get a settlement we might get Japan to accept twelve, and to that we would agree. Even supposing we got Japan to be content with a cruiser ratio of 5 : 5 : 3 on an American strength of twenty-three, that would mean a Japanese building of fourteen—at least two more than there is any chance of our getting our Dominions to agree to.'

Above is for your information and guidance.

<sup>1</sup> No. 43.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 40, p. 60, note 3.

No. 46

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Mr. A. Henderson*

*(Received September 5)*

*No. 98. L.N. Telegraphic [A 5910/30/45]*

GENEVA, *September 5, 1929*

Following for General Dawes from Prime Minister.

Comment made at Geneva went no further than a paragraph with what American press had reported as having been stated by President Hoover when he is reported to have said that within ten days an important statement would be made.

More than that was carefully withheld. I am sorry for delay but it appears to be inevitable and we must have patience. Your message<sup>1</sup> has come in time to enable me to refer to the situation with more caution in a speech which I have to give at a press lunch today when I hope to be able to put everything all right.

<sup>1</sup> See No. 4.

*Sir E. Howard (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson*

*(Received September 6)*

*No. 414 [A 5955/30/45]*

WASHINGTON, *September 5, 1929*

Following for Prime Minister from Sir R. Vansittart.

Your telegram No. 414.<sup>1</sup>

I went with Sir E. Howard first to see Secretary of State and then President this morning. There is no doubt in my mind that they are both sincerely anxious and indeed eager for your visit. I found the former however markedly dejected by the last communication from Dawes received on Saturday.<sup>2</sup> He dwelt on replacement construction of [? fourteen]<sup>3</sup> 6-inch cruisers (which he called 'pre-mature and not mature') and added after adding up tonnage on basis of 18 to 15 in 8-inch class 'What chance have we of getting away with that?' He seemed to consider the latest proposition involved a change of basis and [? said]<sup>3</sup> that he regarded it as being a call for a counter proposition which he did not think could be ready for a fortnight or three weeks. I should describe his attitude as being full of goodwill but not for the moment very optimistic.

I used a number of arguments for desirability of speeding up the proceedings here and these I repeated later to the President. I made it plain that I was on a purely private visit to American relatives and had no mandate to speak but I expressed considerable personal apprehension of the effect on public opinion in both countries of postponement of the visit and expectation of the uses to which this would be turned in certain obvious quarters in view of the publicity and expectations already raised by the project (September 28 has been quoted in the press here). I added that with the House meeting on October 29 it seemed clear it would be far more difficult for the visit which they so much desired to take place thereafter; this in fact was the psychological moment and I hoped they would take the next step [? much more speed]<sup>3</sup>ily than contemplated; for postponement might be distorted into cancellation. This would be only a degree or so worse than a visit unattended by results which we all agreed was impossible.

The President in response to the foregoing said that he agreed and hoped to have his proposal sent to you by Monday.<sup>4</sup> He was far more optimistic than Secretary of State, reiterated how keenly he desired the visit and showed no signs at all of doubting its early possibility. He then indeed proceeded to discuss with Sir E. Howard whether it would be better for you to stay first at the Embassy or at the White House. I have no doubt of his intention to expedite the next step or of his keen wish for agreement. This is shared

<sup>1</sup> This number is wrong. The reference is probably to telegram 431 (No. 45).

<sup>2</sup> August 31. The reference is to Mr. MacDonald's two letters of August 30.

<sup>3</sup> The text here is uncertain.

<sup>4</sup> September 9.



by Secretary of State, who said frankly that so far as Great Britain was concerned there would in his opinion never be a better opportunity.

Neither Sir E. Howard nor I thought it advisable to enter into too much detail of figures in view of discrepancy between Foreign Office telegram No. 425<sup>1</sup> and Secretary of State's account of Dawes' last telegram. Foreign Office telegram No. 431 only reached me after both interviews. The President was informed that I was not due to sail till September 11 and would be happy if I could be of any use in taking back any message for you.

<sup>1</sup> See No. 43, note 2.

## No. 48

*Memorandum from General Dawes to Mr. MacDonald*  
[A 6007/30/45]

LONDON, September 4, 1929

The following telegram<sup>1</sup> has been received from Washington, with reference to the Embassy's telegrams last week:

(1) In view of the revolutionary changes involved in the Prime Minister's new proposals, we shall need to reconsider the entire situation.

(2) His proposal to scrap the *Hawkins* class will be very useful in simplifying the problem, particularly in its presentation to the public. But his other proposals, in increasing British total tonnage and limiting our 8-inch construction, which is the type to which our navy is now committed, presents a problem which, frankly, seems to us extremely difficult if not insoluble.

(3) Thus he now abandons his previous proposal of seven new replacement 6-inch ships, and proposes a replacement programme of fourteen new 6,500-ton 6-inch ships. The introduction of these fourteen new ships entirely upsets our previous discounts for age factor and greatly diminishes the discount to the British fleet and reduces the amount of allowable disparity between the displacement tonnage of the two fleets. Instead of the figures given in our telegram of August 28th dealing with the yardstick for the British discount of 65,000 tons from a fifty-ship 330,000-ton fleet, we would now have a discount of only 51,000 tons from a 339,000-ton fleet, leaving an evaluated British tonnage of about 287,866 tons, instead of about 275,000. Thus the difference between the American and British fleets, after the application of the yardstick, would be even greater than the mere 9,000 tons which has been added to the difference in their displacement tonnage.

(4) The difficulties of his proposal to cut down the American fleet of large cruisers by five units are even greater. This proposal would give an American fleet of a total of only 28 units as against a British fleet of 50 units; an American fleet of a total of 250,000 displacement tons as against a British

<sup>1</sup> The telegram, which was dispatched on September 3, is printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1929*, vol. i, pp. 217-18. The memorandum was communicated to Mr. MacDonald on September 6.

fleet of a total of 339,000 tons, or a disparity of almost 90,000 displacement tons. Frankly, it would be quite hopeless to present anything approaching this to our public or Congress. We recognize the difficulties arising out of the desires of Japan and the attitude of the Dominions, but on our side the Prime Minister must remember that the American policy of a 10,000-ton cruiser fleet has grown out of American needs for cruising radius which are quite as peremptory as the British peace-time needs for police work which he has presented so forcibly and which we have cheerfully recognized. His present proposal cuts the very foundation of this American large cruiser policy.

(5) Under the present conditions, we hope that no statement will be made by the Prime Minister which may lead to false hopes and baseless surmises in the press, as we feel that any such statement would render even more difficult the difficulties we shall experience in the ultimate Conference. The Prime Minister can see from the foregoing that he has confronted us with proposals which can only be solved, if they can be solved at all, after an entire reconsideration of the basis of these negotiations and a thorough consultation with our Naval General Board, which will require not less than a week and which we feel renders it impossible for us to make any reply which the Prime Minister could use at Geneva as the basis of a statement. In view of the expressed desire of the Prime Minister to make such a statement at Geneva, we are despatching this hurriedly. Although, frankly, the difficulties seem to us greater today than they have been for a long time past, we shall take up the matter with our Naval Board with the same earnest desire for an eventual agreement which has actuated us throughout.

#### No. 49

*Letter from Mr. MacDonald to General Dawes*

[A 6007/30/45]

My dear General Dawes,

*September 9, 1929*

Although the confidential memorandum<sup>1</sup> which you handed to me last Friday is of the nature of an interim note, and although it states that my last note to you will have to be considered by the Navy General Board, I send you this in order that there may be no confusion as to how we stand. If you look back at the various notes I have sent you, I think you will agree that the position admits of no doubt, but it might be convenient for the President to have a summary in a very definite form of what I have proposed.

(1) Paragraphs 2 and 3 of the confidential memorandum of Friday are not quite clear, particularly where it is stated that 'he now abandons his previous proposal of 7 new replacement 6-inch ships and proposes a replacing programme of 14 new 6,500-ton 6-inch ships'. This is a misapprehension and the best way to remove it is to come back upon precise figures.

<sup>1</sup> No. 48.

I have agreed to a standard number of 50 cruisers in 1936, and this is how that number is reached:—

The present strength of the British Cruiser Fleet, built and building, but, for the purposes of 1936 assumed to be *built*, is 58. Between now and 1936, 15 of these will disappear on account of age, reducing us to 43. I have proposed to scrap the 4 *Hawkins* group, bringing us down to 39. I explained to you in a previous note that immediately after 1936, say between 1936 and 1940, cruisers were to fall out in blocks and that, as I could not accept a naval holiday because it was impracticable from the point of view of employment of labour, I proposed to scrap prematurely a number of these aged cruisers solely in order to stabilise average building. I have now fixed that number to be scrapped previous to 1936, at 3. That reduces us to 36. Now I propose to build between now and 1936, 14, by way of replacement, and that brings us to the 50 standard. In other words, taken as a whole, the proposal now before President Hoover is that by the 31st December 1936 the British Cruiser Fleet will be 50 and no more. Should any be in the process of building at that date they will only be sufficient to keep the standard at 50 and no more in succeeding years.

(2) As regards the tonnage, and the possibility of including in the 14 which are proposed to be built, ships of about 4,500 tons. I should like the President to consider this. In 1936 we shall have thirty-five 6-inch cruisers, 14 of which will be replacement ships built between now and then of an average of 6,500 tons each; 21 will be older ships; 2 of the 21 are the *Emerald* and the *Enterprise*, and the remaining 19 are all of our 'C' and 'D' class, of an average of slightly over 4,500 tons each. Therefore over half of the 6-inch group will be 4,500-ton ships. When we come to replace after, say, about 1935, we shall have to face the agreement which I am willing to make that the total of 339,000 tons will not be exceeded, assuming that there is no change in the pacific conditions of the world.

This, I hope, will enable the President to visualize the character of the total group, and show him how impossible it is for me to promise a smaller tonnage in the ships to be built within the next seven years.

(3) I had hopes that by extending the age of our cruisers I might be able to meet the President still further, but I am informed that all the calculations given above assume that a cruiser is not scrapped until it has been built for 20 years, so that we are now working upon the maximum proposed by you during our conversations.

(4) I wonder if I might venture to make a suggestion to you regarding the number of 8-inch ships which you say you are bound to build. The conversation<sup>1</sup> which I had at Geneva and which I reported to you on Friday is, I am sure you will agree, a very serious obstacle in the way of a superiority of as much as 8 in your programme. If insisted upon, I am unable to see any way out of the deadlock. I notice, however, that in the Memorandum the very reasonable point is made that you must have ships capable of operating within a large radius.

<sup>1</sup> The reference appears to be to Mr. MacDonald's conversation with the Japanese Ambassador (No. 42).

Could you not build ships that would satisfy the radius requirement and at the same time get me out of my difficulties in relation to other Powers? For instance, would it be feasible for you to build say five, 10,000-ton cruisers carrying 6-inch guns? That would enable you to have the eighteen 8-inch cruisers which I understood originally was satisfactory to you, and at the same time enable you to use effectively the tonnage which you say you require in order to enable you to satisfy your people that you have secured parity with us. As I understand it, the tonnage position will then be that we have 339,000 and you have 300,000, but for your shortage in tonnage you have a superiority of three 8-inch cruisers and possess five other 10,000-ton ships.

(5) These proposals which I am making really touch bottom, and expose me to risks which only the co-operative good-will of other nations and the continued peace of the world will justify me in taking. They are really in the nature of an experiment in peacemaking and will have to be accompanied by two conditions:—

(a) That nothing is done at the Five-Power Conference and no failure experienced there which will upset the basis of security and responsibility embodied in the programme. That means that the final ratification of our agreement would be *after* the Conference, and not before it.

(b) That we should agree to examine the situation in 1935 and see whether the experiment has been justified, and to continue or otherwise the agreement beyond the end of 1936.

In this respect we should just follow the precedent of the Washington Agreement of 1922.

I am, etc.,

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD

#### No. 50

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir E. Howard (Washington)*

*No. 436 Telegraphic [A 5955/30/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 9, 1929*

Following from Prime Minister.

Re Vansittart's message and your letters.

Conversations have reached awkward point in adjustment of parity. If United States insists upon building against us it must accept our minimum programme of requirements *vis-à-vis* the rest of the world. I have made that programme as low as safety will allow. Reflect upon Palestine in relation to this. Also how as ships wear out they can be replaced is a problem we have to face. We cannot build a ten-year-old ship. It must to begin with be a one-year-old. Am not using these things to get round any agreement and hope Washington will accept that assurance. Your help best given in explaining the position we have to face and you know it well. Difficult from this side to decide upon visit. If definite programme of parity has to be arranged first the visit will be impossible in a fortnight and then political conditions here will make it impractical for at least a year, so postponement will be

tantamount to abandonment. I should have thought that the area of agreement and the still wider area of goodwill are sufficient for a week's visit but it must be decided in Washington.

Please advise me within two days as I cannot remain uncertain longer.

### No. 51

*Sir E. Howard (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson*  
(Received September 11)

*No. 425 Telegraphic [A 6073/30/45]*

WASHINGTON, September 10, 1929

Your telegram No. 436.<sup>1</sup>

Following for the Prime Minister.

I to-day submitted to Secretary of State considerations regarding your proposed visit contained in the above mentioned telegram stressing the fact that you thought that after all agreement and goodwill were sufficient to justify the visit. I ventured for the first time to express my own firm opinion that the advantages to be derived from personal contact and opportunity for discussion of Anglo-American problems with the President would far outweigh any danger of disappointment and disillusionment that might arise owing to no final agreement on all points having been arrived at before or during visit. We should, I said, also take into consideration the fact that if the visit was cancelled now public opinion would inevitably attribute false and exaggerated reason for this. I therefore felt strongly that any risk of disillusionment after the visit had better be taken than that the visit should be indefinitely postponed and practically abandoned. I requested Secretary of State to let me have an answer to-day or to-morrow as you could not remain uncertain any longer.

Secretary of State at once consulted the President and on his return from the White House told me that the President was also of the opinion that the visit now was worth any risk it involved. He requested however that definite public announcement of visit should not be made until after you had seen contents of a telegram which he expected to send to United States Ambassador to-morrow or the next day. He asked for this delay in announcement in case there might be something in the telegram which might make you wish to postpone the visit. Telegram to be sent to United States Ambassador will contain new proposals of United States Government based on calculations which Navy Department have been working on since receipt of General Dawes' telegram of August 31.<sup>2</sup> They should be completed to-morrow and a conference is to be held to-morrow morning to discuss them and draft reply.

Both President and Secretary of State seem optimistic that reply will be satisfactory to His Majesty's Government, but they would prefer out of consideration for you and His Majesty's Government that you were not committed publicly to visit until you have seen this reply.

<sup>1</sup> No. 50.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. Mr. MacDonald's letters of August 30 (Nos. 40 and 41).

No. 52

*Sir E. Howard (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson*  
(Received September 11)  
*No. 426 Telegraphic [A 6074/30/45]*

WASHINGTON, September 10, 1929

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

The more I consider the question of Prime Minister's visit here the more strongly do I feel that it should take place whether or not agreement on all points has been reached. Effect of abandonment now will be I fear to make public believe that all hope of agreement has been definitely given up and this will vastly encourage Big Navyites and make any naval understanding most difficult if not impossible for a long time to come.

It is in my opinion almost more important that Prime Minister and President should meet if the present discussions show signs of not succeeding in order that they may discuss an alternative policy of naval understanding without trying to establish absolute parity. They could also decide on some joint *communiqué* to be issued to calm public opinion in case of failure. There will of course be a risk of visit not being such an immense success from the public point of view but unless I entirely misread the American public they will applaud Prime Minister's habit of being ready to take the responsibility of that risk. It is evident to me however that President and Secretary of State want to make it quite clear that they do not wish to incur the responsibility of *inviting* Prime Minister unless the road is quite clear. President will however undoubtedly be very glad to receive the Prime Minister if he comes on his own responsibility.

I should be glad to be informed as soon as Prime Minister decides about coming so that I may begin making arrangements for his engagements here.

<sup>1</sup> No. 51.

No. 53

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir E. Howard (Washington)*  
*No. 439 Telegraphic [A 6074/30/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, September 12, 1929

Your telegrams Nos. 425 and 426<sup>1</sup> (of September 10, naval disarmament). Following from the Prime Minister, begins:—

Unless despatch due to-day makes it impossible I shall leave on September 28 by *Berengaria*. Should leave United States for Canada October 14 unless you think that stay too long. Must see Canadian Premier. Under the circumstances please do not agree to any public functions outside Washington where speeches are expected and keep those in Washington down to a minimum. I should like at least two nights in New York either inwards or outwards. Shall leave from Quebec so as to reach London during week beginning October 27.

<sup>1</sup> Nos. 51 and 52.

Despatch in this morning's *Times* is a most embarrassing revelation of my last despatch. It is impossible for me to withhold information from newspapers here if everything is given out from Washington. These leakages are creating opposition to the whole negotiations. If any communications of substance are made to the press it should be by agreement or after warning so that they may be simultaneous.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In a second telegram of September 12 Mr. MacDonald sent a message, for the private information of Sir E. Howard, as follows: the information 'mostly published from Washington makes postponement of visit a serious international concern whilst the sort of Custom House permission to land which is all your final sentences [i.e. in telegram 426, No. 52] amount to makes the visit a serious personal matter. I yield to the international concern.'

## No. 54

*Memorandum<sup>1</sup> from General Dawes to Mr. MacDonald*  
[A 6095/30/45]

LONDON, September 12, 1929

The following telegram has been received from Washington, dated September 11th, 6 p.m. (No. 242):

For the Prime Minister:

(1) We have now spent the past week in most earnest consideration of the Prime Minister's proposed British cruiser fleet of 339,000 displacement tons comprising fifteen large 8-inch cruisers—146,000 tons; fourteen new replacement cruisers—91,000 tons and twenty-one of the old 6-inch cruisers—101,000 tons, which program includes scrapping the 4 *Hawkins* class.

(2) Our Naval Board reports to us this morning that, in an endeavour to meet the British proposals just as closely as they can, they will, for this purpose, accept, as representing parity with such a program, after taking into account both the age and gun factors, an American fleet comprising twenty-one 8-inch 10,000-ton cruisers—that is, 210,000 tons; ten of the *Omaha* class—70,000 tons; and five new cruisers of about 7,000-ton 6-inch class—about 35,000 tons, making a total of about 315,000 displacement tons.

(3) We are repeating separately our memorandum of August 28th of the points of agreement, in which we have deleted the eighth and ninth paragraphs as suggested by you and we have changed the wording of the new paragraphs eight and nine to coincide with the above. We have purposely left out mentioning the total number of British and American ships in these paragraphs eight and nine as it seems to us it would create less discussion and allow larger liberty of action by placing the whole question on a tonnage basis, subject to the yardstick, rather than upon the number of ships.

We have also simplified the memorandum by adding the words 'scrapping, obsolescence and construction' to paragraph four and deleting the same words from paragraph seven.

<sup>1</sup> This memorandum, together with the documents in Nos. 55 and 56, was handed by General Dawes to Mr. MacDonald on September 12. The telegrams in question are printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1929*, vol. i, pp. 222-5.

(4) We have also reconstructed the new eleventh paragraph from the old thirteenth.

(5) We suggest that the memorandum can be given to the other Powers in issuing the call for conference and given to the public at the same time, but that the contents of this and other telegrams should be held confidential. We expect to be consulted as to form of call for conference and as to time and form of giving publicity to memorandum.

## No. 55

### *Memorandum from General Dawes to Mr. MacDonald*

[A 6096/30/45]

LONDON, September 12, 1929

The following telegram has been received from Washington, dated September 11th, 7 p.m.

You will please communicate the following to the Prime Minister:

In respect to our cablegram 242, the President trusts that the Prime Minister will realise the very great advantage from the President's point of view in planning an agreement which will carry the enthusiastic and cordial support of our Naval Board. He understands that the Prime Minister is in exactly the same position with the Admiralty.

The final result of our cable 242 is that the Prime Minister's technical experts and ours are apart on only one point, and on that point are not far apart. This particular point is represented by the question as to whether three of the American cruisers are to be of the 8-inch 10,000-ton type or whether there is to be a substitute for them of, say, four cruisers of the 6-inch gun type.

Or, in the more recent view of the Prime Minister (your 266, four),<sup>1</sup> the question is whether these three cruisers of 10,000 tons are to have 8-inch guns or 6-inch guns mounted upon them. The Prime Minister will note that neither we nor our Naval Board have suggested any alteration in the Prime Minister's proposal for the British fleet, so that altogether, out of the perfected settlements covering in all categories perhaps 1,200,000 tons in each of our respective fleets, we are down to this small difference.

The President thinks that when we consider all these things and realise that the items we are discussing are so small a percentage of our total difficulties, and that we are developing the greatest problem in statesmanship of our times, and, when we realise how strongly the people behind us desire disarmament and peace, he feels sure that we could, between the two Governments, compromise these small differences.

The President earnestly wishes Mr. MacDonald to visit the United States.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> i.e. Mr. MacDonald's letter (No. 49) of September 9 to General Dawes.

<sup>2</sup> In a message of September 12 to General Dawes for Mr. MacDonald Mr. Stimson noted that this sentence might be open to misinterpretation. The United States Government did not consider that Mr. MacDonald should come to Washington in order 'to discuss and try to end the points of difference' between the Naval Board and the Admiralty. These points of difference could be dealt with best at the Naval Conference.



*Memorandum from General Dawes to Mr. MacDonald*

[A 6097/30/45]

LONDON, *September 12, 1929*

The following telegram has been received from Washington dated September 11th, 8 p.m.

The following principles are set down upon which the Government of the United States and His Majesty's Government propose, as relating to their own Governments, to enter upon a conference of the principal naval Powers for the limitation and reduction of naval armament.

First: these negotiations are the result of the General Pact for the Denunciation of War and the consequent realignment of national attitudes to the position that armament<sup>1</sup> may not be used as an instrument of national policy in the relations of nations with each other; therefore, that Pact must be taken as the starting-point of agreement.

Second: we agree on parity in combatant strength of the respective navies.

Third: we agree that this parity shall be separately by categories of capital ships, aircraft carriers, destroyers, cruisers, and submarines.

Fourth: we agree that we shall consider December 31st, 1936, as the date on which parity shall be reached between our two fleets, either by scrapping, obsolescence, or construction, as the two navies may require.

Fifth: the Washington Treaty having fixed the ratio of capital ships and aircraft carriers to that date, we shall not disturb the provisions of that Treaty except that we shall reconsider its replacement programs with the view of diminishing the amount of replacement construction implied under that Treaty.

Sixth: the scrapping age of ships is to be:—as to cruisers, twenty years; as to destroyers, sixteen years; and as to submarines, thirteen years. Ships are to be scrapped forthwith on reaching scrapping age, except that ships may be retained beyond scrapping age as an alternative to permitted replacements, and except as stated in the eighth (paragraph).

Seventh: as to submarines we agree to the principle of total abolition in international war but we realise that it may be difficult to secure the consent of other nations to this proposal.

Eighth: we agree upon reduction of the present aggregate tonnages of destroyers and submarines and the limitation of future construction. The United States may retain destroyers and submarines temporarily in excess of the point of parity agreed upon and after the age of obsolescence during such period prior to 1936, as Great Britain retains tonnages beyond parity in the cruiser category.

Ninth: the British cruiser strength shall be reduced to a maximum of

<sup>1</sup> In a note on this draft it was pointed out by the Admiralty that it was desirable to adhere to the wording of the Pact of Paris and to substitute the word 'war' for the word 'armament'. If the latter word were used, the duties carried out (for example) by H.M. loops in the Persian Gulf might be held to contravene the article.

a total displacement of 339,000 standard tons, of which not to exceed 15 ships may be 10,000 ton or less with 8-inch guns.

Tenth: the United States cruiser strength shall be brought to parity with British cruiser strength as above stated, taking into account in both navies the elements of displacement, age, and guns, but the United States shall have not to exceed 21 of the 10,000-ton ships with 8-inch guns.

Eleventh: the standard of cruiser strength, stated in paragraphs ninth and tenth, are maximums which both Governments desire to reduce at the Conference, and it is agreed that earnest consideration will be given before and during the Conference to methods by which further reduction can be accomplished, including consideration of confining a part of cruiser construction by both nations to peace type police cruisers of limited armament and speed.

Twelfth: any agreement to be reached at the Conference is to contain a provision that it is open to reconsideration by any of the parties in the event of the inauguration of a menacing building program by any non-signatory Power.

Thirteenth: a conference of the Five Powers is to be called by the British Government to take place in London early in December, 1929.

Fourteenth: it will be proposed to the other naval Powers signatory to the Washington Treaty that this Conference become the Conference provided under the Washington Treaty to be called in 1931.

#### No. 57

*Sir E. Howard (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson*  
(Received September 13)

*No. 431 Telegraphic [A 6117/30/45]*

WASHINGTON, September 12, 1929

Following from Sir R. Vansittart for Prime Minister.

I had an hour with President this morning. He was cordial and confident although he dwelt on the difficulties he had encountered during the last fortnight and evidently wished me to let you know the obstacles he had encountered and was indeed still encountering. He said however margin of difference was now so slight and petty that it was inconceivable that it should not be bridged. He expected it to be not only a matter of no more than some 30,000 tons but again only whether those should be 6 inch or 8 inch. You and he would not overcome obstacles raised by naval authorities without a final showdown (for which he seemed both prepared and determined); time for that however was Five-Power Conference and not during your visit here. He did not wish that visit to be involved in any bickering of detail; but at Conference final difference would be so small and even childish that public opinion would not allow it to be maintained by the Navy party. His idea is that the Conference should take place as soon as possible after your visit in order to allow as little time as possible for propaganda which is evidently a considerable factor to his mind. (In this con-

nexion Shearer case<sup>1</sup> has occurred at an opportune moment and will tend to keep things quiet. He said he would take a further occasion of speaking out about that and added 'I wish you could find a Shearer'.) If you saw your way to accept principles of revised memorandum<sup>2</sup> which should be by now in your possession he would propose it should be annexed to the declaration to other Powers.

It seems to me that course now contemplated would remove any risk of break or failure during your visit. (a) I think President is fairly confident it should not occur. (b) If it did, it would be at the later Five-Power Conference and (c) judging by Foreign Office telegram No. 431 of September 5<sup>3</sup> which is my only information on the subject blame for any eventual failure would be laid on other shoulders than yours; for whatever attitude Dominions may [? adopt]<sup>4</sup> Senate would almost certainly not accept any real cruiser modification of Washington ratios in Japan's favour. According to today's press leading Senators have notified President to this effect. See also Sir E. Howard's despatch No. 731 of April 13.<sup>5</sup> (d) It would be clear that you personally at least had done the most and uttermost for agreement by making visit which I now think definitely contains more elements of advantage than risk.

President said that any date that suited you would suit him. If you decide to come September 28 will probably be best; in any case I think he would appreciate decision at your earliest convenience as he is due for a trip West and is holding all his engagements till he hears from you.

I propose to discuss with Sir E. Howard provisional programme for you and leave Washington this afternoon.

<sup>1</sup> On September 21 a sub-committee of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee opened an inquiry into the alleged attempt by Mr. Shearer to influence the Naval Conference of 1927 at Geneva in the interest of the United States shipping corporations.

<sup>2</sup> No. 56.

<sup>3</sup> No. 45.

<sup>4</sup> The text here is uncertain.

<sup>5</sup> Not printed. This dispatch dealt with the views of leading Senators on the situation with regard to naval armaments.

## No. 58

### *Letter from Mr. MacDonald to General Dawes*

[A 6121/30/45]

My dear General Dawes,

September 13, 1929

I have now had time to study the proposals which you left with me yesterday in three separate messages—one a re-draft of the proposed terms of agreement, one which conveys to me the opinions of the Naval Board, and one which gives me your President's tentative views. The delay in my answer is owing to the fact that the First Sea Lord is up in Argyllshire shooting, and before sending you this reply I felt that I ought to get his concurrence, which I now have.

1.—The proposal of your Navy Board, if I understand it aright, I comment upon as follows:

Your last despatch suggested as parity with our programme, twenty-three 8-inch 10,000-ton cruisers (one of which you were doubtful if you could sustain on the application of a yardstick) plus 10 *Omahas* of 7,000 tons each, equalling 300,000 tons. With a view to our international relationships we suggested that it might meet your requirements to take eighteen 8-inch cruisers, plus five 10,000 ton 6-inch cruisers, plus 10 *Omahas*, which also equalled 300,000 tons. An American strength of eighteen 8-inch cruisers is a very critical figure for us, not as regards you but as regards the rest of the world. We considered that our superiority of 39,000 tons was adequately set off by your superiority of three 8-inch cruisers plus five 10,000-ton 6-inch cruisers. Your Navy Board's proposal is that you should reduce your 8-inch cruisers by 2, making 21, and that you should also build five 7,000-ton 6-inch cruisers and retain your ten *Omahas*. This amounts to a tonnage of 315,000; in other words that a difference of 24,000 tons in our favour should be set off by a superiority of six 8-inch cruisers in yours. In your despatch dated September 11th, 7 *p.m.*, it is suggested as a way of meeting us that you should use the tonnage of three 8-inch cruisers (thus bringing<sup>1</sup> your 8-inch cruiser strength down to 18) by building either four 6-inch cruisers of, I suppose, 7,500 tons each, or three 6-inch cruisers of 10,000 tons each. That would give you a fleet of eighteen 8-inch cruisers, ten *Omahas*, and eight or nine 6-inch cruisers, the total tonnage being again 315,000.

2.—On my side I am advised that a total tonnage difference of 39,000 tons barely compensates for the 33,000 tons superiority in 8-inch tonnage plus the 50,000 extra 6-inch tonnage which I ventured to suggest for your consideration in my last despatch. The difference between us is only 15,000 tons or two 7,500-ton cruisers, and I am prepared to leave this for adjustment as far as our relations to the United States alone are concerned. The figures of the Navy Board as regards 8-inch cruisers would present insuperable difficulties, especially in view of international ratios.

3.—As is remarked in one of your despatches, our conversations have brought the margin of difference to such a very small compass that it is unthinkable that it can prevent a settlement, and now I am content to leave it as it is pending further conversations which, in your last brief message, Mr. Hoover suggests should be continued at the Five-Power Conference. I think, however, it would be a great pity if he and I did not exchange views upon the outstanding point when we are together, and try to come to some agreement. We have never started a game of huckstering and these conversations would not degenerate into that. They would, however, tend to make the understanding between us more complete and more cordial, and I am far more interested in that than in anything else. Unless, therefore, he absolutely prohibits it, I would like to continue with him the conversations which, for my part at any rate, I have found so delightfully enlightening when we two were engaging in them. The danger of leaving any hiatus in our understanding to a Five-Power Conference is very great especially

<sup>1</sup> In text of this letter printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1929*, vol. i, pp. 226-9, this sentence reads 'the President's message bringing'.

if we find that anybody is trying to drive a wedge between us. If either the President or myself found that a continuation of the conversations would become embarrassing in any way, I am sure we could trust enough to each other's friendship and goodwill to call a halt. For myself, I do not apprehend the least shadow of such a difficulty.

4.—In order to leave both him and myself free for the Five-Power Conference, I suggest that we should agree to review the agreement we may make together after that Conference has been held, lest in consequence of it some readjustment may have to be made. I do not anticipate that this will be necessary, but it would assure opinion here if it felt that an arrangement which we were anxious to make with you would not seriously prejudice our relations with other Powers.

5.—I think that we ought also to agree on the lines of the Washington Conference decision that in 1935 we should review the situation of the world in relation to this agreement. To be perfectly candid with you, it comes short of what I should like, but at the same time my mind is perfectly clear that it is as much as I can consent to in the light of present circumstances. The world is not too comfortable a place for men of goodwill today, and when they are composed of two parts—50 per cent. caution and 50 per cent. ideal desire—they have at the end of the day to admit that the good they would do they cannot do fully. If we could have a really big influence on world policy for six years, I believe that some of the things which we really must make provision for now will have been dissipated, and a review of this agreement in 1935 would enable us to reduce some of these figures. It is going to be six years of hard political work to remove from the minds of the people of Europe the shadow of fear, and until that has been done both America and us (*sic*) will have to accommodate ourselves to a disturbed world.

6.—I am having prepared, and will send you without delay, the invitation which I think should go to the Washington Convention signatories. Would you be so good as to ask Mr. Hoover if he places any importance upon a December meeting? I have discussed that with the Foreign Office and the Admiralty and they both take the view that it is impossible. We must give time for dispatches to go to and come from Japan, by bag as well as by cable, for governments to set up committees to consider their attitude, and for delegates to come from Japan. Moreover, it is not at all unlikely that I shall find it advisable to have preparatory conversations with some of the other Powers interested so that as far as humanly possible we shall all be safeguarded against a failure. Finally, it is inadvisable to call a meeting which may be interrupted in the middle of its work by the Christmas holidays.

I should be glad if you would put these points to your President and tell him that the opinion here this morning is that the Conference should be called for the middle or latter part of January. I could then guarantee to take a hold on the business myself and give it more or less undivided attention. Of course before we send out the invitations I shall let you have a copy for transmission to the President so that he may make his comments before the issue takes place.

7.—I cannot tell you how relieved I am that the way has been opened up for a visit to Washington. I know the delicacies which will have to be observed, but I am sure that with generosity and the forbearance of goodwill on both sides they will all be successfully overcome. I am confident that the feeling of Europe demands that we should see each other and that our meeting should be a signal to the rest of the world to think generously and behave decently.

When I have a little more leisure I really must put on paper an expression of some of the obligations we all owe to you for what you have done since you set foot on our shores. I feel that if this were to end one's service for the world, it would have been worth while.

In due course I shall send you what will appear to be, after the high importance of our previous conversations, some trivial matters—details which I propose for the distribution of my time in America.

With kindest regards, etc.,

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD

## No. 59

### *Letter from Mr. MacDonald to General Dawes*

[A 6121/30/45]

My dear General Dawes,

September 13, 1929

I now send you my suggestions regarding the Memorandum which, when agreed to, is to be handed to the other Naval Powers and published.

(1) The Sections to which no reference is made are agreed.

(2) Section Seven. The words 'it may be difficult to secure the consent of other nations to this proposal' seem to give up the battle before we engage in it. Would it suit the President if these words were to be substituted: 'a final decision upon this must be such as the Five Power Conference will accept'?

(3) Sections Nine and Ten. These Sections include a specific mention of fifteen and twenty-one 8-inch cruisers. It is true that these figures are given as *maxima* but as they are just those about which we are still negotiating the mention of them is likely to be misunderstood. Would the President consider the ending of Section Nine at 'standard tons' and of Section Ten at 'and guns'? It will be perfectly well known that these two figures have been mentioned by us and discussion will range round them, but for the purposes of a published Agreement I think on the whole it would be advisable to make the alterations I suggest.

(4) Section Eleven. I agree to this being put on the Agenda of the business of the Conference but, as I told you, I am meeting with considerable technical difficulties which the President will easily understand when I tell him that they relate to the fact that police cruisers of slow speed, in the event of any naval disturbance, would be smashed to smithereens and the most friendly and helpful of my advisers, whilst favourable to the idea if it could

be worked out and generally agreed to, would like to delete the final words 'of limited armament and speed' and put instead some such words as 'of severely limited fighting value'. Frankly, the technicians who have to design such ships are very doubtful if the idea is practicable, but they will work at it. Meantime, if we specify too definitely what the characteristic of a police cruiser is it will put obstacles in the way of getting them accepted and I have been advised that that objection will be taken even more strongly by some other Powers than by ourselves.

(5) I should like after Section Twelve that a clause would be put in to run as follows:

'Thirteenth. During or before 1935 this Agreement will be reviewed for the purpose of considering whether these provisions regarding naval strengths could not be revised so as to contribute more than is possible at the moment to general disarmament.'

(6) Section Thirteen. (New Fourteen.) If the President agrees to my observations about the date of the Conference made in my note of to-day, '1929' should be deleted and the words 'or January next' inserted.

(7) Section Fourteen would then become Section Fifteen.

(8) In order to carry out another precaution which has been referred to several times in our conversation I think a note should be added as follows:

'NOTE: It is understood that, if the decisions of the Five Power Conference or its failure to come to decisions should affect this agreement, readjustments will be made in it so that it may conform to the conditions left by the Conference.'

The only purpose of this is to prevent arguments which may proceed on the assumption that we have bound ourselves to a programme which may find us in a state of inferiority to Powers upon whose building we must keep our eye. Moreover, if other Powers assume that you and we have fixed ourselves up before we meet them they may trade upon that assumption and give us difficulties in the further negotiations.

Perhaps the President would be so good as to let me have his decision on these points without delay and then we could simultaneously publish the document.

I am, etc.,

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD

## No. 60

*Memorandum<sup>1</sup> from General Dawes to Mr. MacDonald*

[A 6179/30/45]

LONDON, September 16, 1929

Your 269<sup>2</sup> was received late today and a more careful study of it may make it advisable for me to follow this cable with a further one early next week

<sup>1</sup> This memorandum was based on a telegram of September 14 from Mr. Stimson to General Dawes. The text of the telegram is printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1929, vol. i, pp. 230-1.

<sup>2</sup> This telegram reported the first of Mr. MacDonald's letters of September 13 (No. 58).

after fuller conference with the President. While we have from the beginning endeavoured to recognise and give weight to the international difficulties which shall be presented by the excess in 8-inch cruiser tonnage insisted on by our Naval Board we must emphasise the difficulties with which we on our side would be confronted in obtaining the consent of our Senate to any reduction in large cruiser figures which were not supported by our naval advisers—this is a very real difficulty which we cannot lose sight of. The President will be quite willing to exchange views with Mr. MacDonald when he is here on these points and to try to arrive at a settlement as between himself and Mr. MacDonald. In view of this and the difficulties Mr. MacDonald feels he will have with our figures we make the following suggestions:

(1) We think it would be well for the Prime Minister to have in this case during the time of his visit a British Naval Officer in whom he has confidence with whom he could consult if necessary as to the views of his Admiralty. We hope that such consultation may not be necessary, but we can see that such a course might have great advantages in facilitating a successful conclusion of the conversations between the President and the Prime Minister.

(2) We think there should be no publication of the agreement contained in our 244<sup>1</sup> until after the meeting between the President and the Prime Minister. We are not satisfied with the language of 244 from the standpoint of publicity, and we think that after the personal meeting between Mr. Hoover and Mr. MacDonald not only would it be possible to put it into better form for publication but we might possibly be able to make it more complete.

(3) For the same reason we think that the actual sending out of the invitations to the Conference might also better wait until after Mr. MacDonald's visit. The President is willing to defer to the Prime Minister's suggestion of a postponement of the Conference, and that being so, would permit the postponement of the invitations. We feel that the personal conferences during Mr. MacDonald's visit will throw so much light on the character and date of the Conference as to make it worth while to postpone the invitations till then.

<sup>1</sup> No. 56.

## No. 61

*Letter from Mr. MacDonald to General Dawes*

[A 6179/30/45]

My dear General Dawes,

*September 17, 1929*

I saw the Italian and Japanese Ambassadors last night (the French was out of town) and told them of how matters stood between us in terms which have already been published in the press—but without the mistakes which



are included in all the newspaper stories. There is, however, one proposal made by the Secretary of State in his last message which you might reconsider. He proposes that no invitation should be sent to the Naval Powers to attend a Conference until after I have been in Washington. Both Washington and London have given it out that they are to propose such a Conference and a delay in issuing an official notification to that effect would give rise to all sorts of surmises and might give time for difficulties to grow up in our way.

I am asking the Foreign Office to send you a copy of a dispatch<sup>1</sup> which I think ought to go at once to the Ambassadors of France, Italy and Japan in London. Perhaps after what has been published in the press you will be willing to agree to its being sent without referring it to Washington, but, if you decide otherwise, I should be glad if you would let the Foreign Office have the consent of Washington as soon as you possibly can. The sooner we settle this the better for the successful completion of the work we have been doing.

I am, etc.,

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD

<sup>1</sup> No. 62.

## No. 62

### *Draft note of invitation to the Naval Conference*

[A 6179/30/45]

Your Excellency,<sup>1</sup>

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September, 1929*

I have the honour to inform Your Excellency that the informal conversations on the subject of naval disarmament which have been proceeding in London during the last three months between the Prime Minister and the Ambassador of the United States have now reached a stage at which it is possible to say that no point of such serious importance as to prevent an agreement now divides the two Governments.

From time to time the Prime Minister has notified Your Excellency of the progress made in these discussions, and I now have the honour to state that provisional and informal agreement between His Majesty's Government and the Government of the United States has been reached on the following principles:

(1) The conversations are the result of the Treaty for the Renunciation of War signed at Paris in August, 1928, and the consequent realignment of our national attitudes to the position that war may not be used as an instrument of national policy in the relations of nations with each other. The Peace Pact must therefore be regarded as the starting-point of agreement.

<sup>1</sup> The draft note was addressed to the French, Italian, and Japanese Ambassadors in London.

(2) It has been made abundantly clear both by His Majesty's present Government and by their predecessors in office that this country has no intention of instituting a programme of naval construction in competition with the United States. The conversations have therefore been directed towards the programme which both Governments could agree to be parity in the combatant strength of the two navies. Furthermore, the aim which both Governments have had in view throughout has been the reduction and not merely the limitation of naval strength.

(3) The conversations have covered the whole field of naval disarmament and have dealt in greater or less detail with all categories.

(4) It is agreed that parity as between the two nations shall be established by December 31, 1936.

(5) The main subject which has been under discussion has been the relative cruiser strength of the two navies. The position reached at present is that Great Britain has agreed to accept the following minimum cruiser strength:

15 8-inch gun ships with a total tonnage of	. . .	146,800
35 6-inch gun ships with a total tonnage of	. . .	<u>192,200</u>
Making a grand total for the cruiser strength of the		
British Navy of . . . . .	. . . . .	339,000 tons

As against this, the Government of the United States propose that the following should be regarded as parity in combatant strength with Great Britain.

21 8-inch gun ships with a total tonnage of	. . .	210,000
10 of the existing <i>Omaha</i> class of 6-inch gun ships with a	. . .	
total tonnage of . . . . .	. . .	70,000
5 new 6-inch gun ships with a total tonnage of	. . .	<u>35,000</u>
Making a grand total of . . . . .	. . . . .	315,000 tons

His Majesty's Government have not accepted the above figures for the American Navy as constituting their conception of what would be parity with the British minimum figures, but I am happy to state that the margin which divides the two Governments is a relatively small one. For the confidential information of the (French) (Italian) (Japanese) Government I would add that His Majesty's Government are prepared to accept as parity in combatant strength a maximum figure for the United States of eighteen 10,000-ton 8-inch gun cruisers and a maximum total cruiser tonnage of 300,000.

(6) The question of battleship strength was also touched upon during the conversations, and both Governments are in agreement that, subject to the assent of the other signatory Powers, it would be desirable to reconsider the battleship replacement programmes provided for in the Washington Treaty of 1922 with the view of diminishing the amount of replacement construction implied under that Treaty.

(7) As regards other categories of ships, i.e. destroyers and submarines, His Majesty's Government and the Government of the United States are agreed that parity should be established on the basis of ton for ton. Since

both Governments adhere to the attitude that they have publicly adopted in regard to the desirability of securing the total abolition of the submarine, this matter hardly gave rise to discussion during the recent conversations. They recognise, however, that no final settlement of this subject can be reached except in conference with the other naval Powers.

In view of the scope of these discussions, the Government of the United States and His Majesty's Government consider it as most desirable that a conference should be summoned at an early date to replace the conference which, under the terms of the Washington Treaty, is to be held in the year 1931. It is our earnest hope that the (French) (Italian) (Japanese) Government will agree as to the desirability of the conference being ante-dated in this manner and will be willing to appoint representatives to attend a conference which, it is suggested by the United States as well as ourselves, should be held in London at the beginning of the third week in January, 1930. The Conference, it is further suggested, should be constituted in the same way as was the Washington Conference of 1921. A similar invitation is being addressed to the Governments of (Italy, Japan) (France, Japan) (France, Italy) and the United States. I should be grateful if Your Excellency would cause the above invitation to be addressed to the (French) (Italian) (Japanese) Government.

In the same way as the two Governments have kept Your Excellency informally *au courant* of the recent discussions, so now His Majesty's Government will be willing, in the interval before the proposed conference, to continue informal conversations with Your Excellency on any points which may require elucidation. The importance of reviewing the whole naval situation at an early date is so vital in the interests of general disarmament that I trust that Your Excellency's Government will see their way to accept this invitation and that the date proposed will be agreeable to them.

It is hoped that at this Conference the five principal naval Powers may be successful in reaching agreement as between themselves on all outstanding problems of naval disarmament and that by this means a text can be elaborated which will facilitate the task of the League of Nations Preparatory Commission and of the subsequent General Disarmament Conference. I should like to emphasise that His Majesty's Government have discovered no inclination in any quarter to set up new machinery for dealing with the naval disarmament question; on the contrary, there is a very general desire to look upon these negotiations as an effort on the part of the five naval Powers to carry out the invitation given to them by the President of the Preparatory Commission to try to come to a naval agreement amongst themselves and thus facilitate the work of the Preparatory Commission of the League of Nations.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This last sentence was drafted in the above form by Mr. MacDonald. The Foreign Office subsequently suggested that, if an opportunity occurred, it would be more accurate to read, for the words 'President . . . Nations', 'Preparatory Commission to consider amongst themselves the proposals made by the representative of the United States at the last session of the Commission'.

*Memorandum<sup>1</sup> from General Dawes to Mr. MacDonald*

[A 6260/30/45]

LONDON, *September 19, 1929*

The following telegram has been received from Washington, dated September 17, 8 p.m. (No. 250):

Here follows the letter of the President mentioned in my 249:<sup>2</sup>

The White House,  
Washington.

September 17, 1929

The Honourable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington, D.C.

My dear Mr. Secretary,

I have been giving a great deal of thought over the week-end to the Prime Minister's latest despatches.

I am, of course, glad to discuss with him on his visit the gap between our two cruiser proposals but I suggest later on a method of closing it before Mr. MacDonald's visit. I dislike the idea that Mr. MacDonald's visit might become one of negotiation or split on such a question as this, for our whole great program might in public mind degenerate into a huckster's quibble; nor does it seem to me that we should fail after Mr. MacDonald's visit to call the Conference because of such a gap. The purpose of the Conference is to find methods for surmounting difficulties that we cannot otherwise solve.

The position as I see it on the two proposals as to cruisers is that the British, with 339,000 tons, would have a superiority of some 24,000 tons over the American 315,000 tons, a superiority to the British equal to, say, four medium size modern cruisers as against the American Navy having the advantage of two inches in gun caliber on 60,000 tons, or 30 per cent of its fleet. It is true that part of the British cruisers will be less modern than ours, yet our *Omaha* class is in turn less modern than other important British classes. I am, therefore, convinced that we have gone as far as we can go on this line. We have on our side a great burden indeed to prove to our people that we have parity in the two programs, when the American Navy will be 24,000 tons and 16 ships less than the British Navy, even if it be compensated by larger gun caliber and an average more modern fleet—that is by the yardstick.

<sup>1</sup> The text of the telegram in this memorandum is printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1929, vol. i, pp. 240-3.

<sup>2</sup> In this telegram (printed op. cit., pp. 238-40) Mr. Stimson dealt with various points in Mr. MacDonald's letters of September 13. A copy of this telegram was given to Mr. MacDonald.

I am willing to try to carry this burden through, but I do not believe, if Mr. MacDonald understood the difficulties of our situation, he would insist upon enlarging this margin by 15,000 tons and decreasing the compensation in gun caliber. Our situation is necessarily so different from his, because, having arrived in a position in which his own political colleagues have agreed to support him, he can carry through Parliament.

We, on the other hand, have to persuade an independent branch of the Government to vote with us by a two-thirds majority. I am, however, very anxious to find a way around this difficulty by mutual concession, especially as the twenty-one large cruisers on our part may affect the program for the other Powers.

It seems to me that the emphasis which the Prime Minister properly lays upon the importance of the second conference in 1935 to again reduce the world's naval arms, suggests a new line of thought and presents a basis to re-orient our whole discussions and proposals.

Under the cruiser programs which we have been discussing, the British will, between now and the conference of 1935, lay down 91,000 tons in new 6-inch cruisers. We must lay down 145,000 tons further. This in addition to the ships which we now have in construction. In other words we shall between us have imposed upon ourselves say 236,000 tons of new warships at an expense of say \$1,500 a ton, a total expenditure of over \$350,000,000, some part of which at least would be much better invested in works contributing to real human welfare. And then after we have done all this the whole purpose of the proposed 1935 conference and the aspirations we have with regard to it would be that, after we have built up all this tonnage and expended all this money, we shall then try to find a method by which we shall scrap it, or some large part of it.

It seems to me that there is the most profound outlook for peace today that we have had at any time in the last half century, more especially if we succeed in our conference of January next, yet, in effect, we are plunging along, building more ships at fabulous expense, only with the hope and aspiration that, at the end of a period so short as six years, we shall be able to sink a considerable part of them.

In the same line of thought, it occurs to me that the dangers of war during the next six or ten years for either of our countries in any direction are inconceivably less than they have been at any period since the Great War. But I find on examination that the British Empire has apparently, during the past few years, been able to preserve peace and provide for its naval defense with a very much smaller cruiser fleet than that now contemplated.

The figures given to me indicate that the British cruiser strength actually in commission in 1922 was 285,000 tons; that it decreased to 244,000 in 1925 and that, after allowing for recent disposal of three old ships, it comprises only 300,000 tons actually in commission today. Yet we are proposing at the present moment that the British fleet should be increased to 339,000 tons. Again, in the American fleet I find that we had in commission a total cruiser tonnage of 161,000 in 1922, 153,000 in 1925, and that we have today

a tonnage of 100,000 tons afloat—and we are likewise proposing to increase this to 315,000 tons by 1936. In the same breath we are promising the world that at that date we shall use our best endeavours to sink a considerable portion of these fleets. All this is illogical and is the simple negation of our own aspirations and I believe also of public opinion on both sides of the Atlantic.

This discussion between our Governments has been in progress now for about three months. There has been time for public opinion to react on all sides, and there is the most extraordinary unanimity and prayer throughout both countries and the whole world that we shall succeed in actually reducing naval strength, not that we shall increase it.

The major discordant note we have is the criticism in the United States over the published statements of proposed cruiser programs—that it is not a program of reduction but a program of expansion. We are faced with the practical fact, however, that, to abolish competition and to get any program accepted, we must reach what will not only be parity but what will carry to our people a conviction of parity.

In view of this situation I am anxious that, before Mr. MacDonald arrives, he shall have opportunity to find whether or not it will be possible for him to reduce the proposed tonnage of the British fleet from 339,000 tons to at least 300,000 tons. I would be glad to join with him in so bold a move. On such a gross tonnage we could in turn reduce our program by 39,000 tons, thus solving the question of reduction of our 8-inch cruisers from 21 to 18 and allowing us to make a further cut of one proposed new 6-inch 7,000-ton cruiser.

I know that upon turning to his charts Mr. MacDonald will find that with his proposed replacement program of 14 new ships this could not be accomplished. If on the other hand after scrapping the *Hawkins* class he limited his replacements so as to provide the laying down of one cruiser per annum or a total of six replacements he would keep constant employment in his yards and he could perhaps worry along with his policing of the British Empire by extending the life of some of his older ships for a few years and we would thus each of us arrive at 1936 with at least 39,000 tons less of new ships to deal with. Such a program could apparently be worked out to about 50 ships. I may mention that we have four cruisers now in service that are over 25 years old, and one 30 years old, that do most effective police duty in various parts of the world. Even a reduction of 39,000 tons in our cruiser programs seems small in the face of all our public backing in this situation and I should like to see it down another 50,000 but I do not wish to seem impractical.

I would call your attention to the fact that, if our present agreement is proposed to be binding only to 1936, if at that time the reduction of the British Fleet to 300,000 tons proved too severe, it could be corrected then.

There are some other phases of the problem which seem to me also of the utmost importance and could quite well be taken up on Mr. MacDonald's arrival here with a view to making an announcement, after his visit, of an

accord, much more powerful from a world point of view. At various times in these discussions we have referred to the maximum destroyer strength of somewhere about 150,000 tons for each country. If we could agree on this figure it would in itself mark a great tonnage reduction on both sides, although we would each require some construction for replacement. Likewise, on submarines, if we could agree on some maximum tonnage for each country at, say, 75,000 or even 50,000 tons, it would be helpful to have such a figure declared to the world as a part of our accord.

Another *still more important phase of the whole* discussion that I think we should bring in, and which I would appreciate Mr. MacDonald's having in mind, is whether or not, as a part of this preliminary accord, we *could not settle the proportion of replacements of battleships we should propose* to the January Conference that are to be undertaken prior to 1936.

By reference to the Washington Arms Treaty I find that we each of us are presumed to lay down cruisers<sup>1</sup> G and D in 1931, E and F in 1932, G in 1933, H and I in 1934,<sup>2</sup> and K and L in 1935. As these ships are 35,000 tons each, this amounts to each country laying down ten ships or 350,000 tons which will represent a commitment to an expenditure to our two countries of over \$1,000,000,000.

I recognise the Prime Minister's feeling that he must keep continuous construction going in his navy yards, but it would seem to me this could be accomplished if we laid down a maximum of one ship each eighteen months which would reduce the number laid down from ten to four on each side. The net effect of all this would simply be that we should maintain in service our present ships for a longer time than we contemplated in the treaty, which would give opportunity in our second conference in 1935 to reconsider whether or not we should scrap these older ships and thus reduce the capital ships in the world. It would seem to me a most effective and comforting statement if we could arrive at some such proposal as this during Mr. MacDonald's visit and could announce it as part of the conclusions at which we have arrived.

Obviously proportionately the same reduction would need be accepted by the other signatories to the Washington Agreement and they should be glad to have such an opportunity.

I shall look forward to the Prime Minister's visit as an opportunity for most distinguished accomplishment.

Yours, etc.,

HERBERT HOOVER

I should be glad if you would communicate it to the Prime Minister.

<sup>1</sup> [Note in original text.] In Embassy's opinion this should read 'capital ships'.

<sup>2</sup> [Note in original text.] N.B. The treaty reads: 'J' in 1935, and K and L in 1936.

## No. 64

### *Memorandum from General Dawes to Mr. MacDonald*

[A 6250/30/45]

LONDON, *September 18, 1929*

The following telegram has been received from Washington, dated September 17th, 9 p.m. (No. 251):

We have just received the first section of your telegram 274.<sup>1</sup> Until we have an opportunity to receive the proposed invitation and to state our views, please do not, under any circumstances, consent to its being sent out. We think that the invitation itself had much better await the termination of the Prime Minister's visit, and the President and I have serious objections to even the portion of it contained in this first section. After receipt of the remainder of the proposed invitation, I will give you our matured views regarding it.

<sup>1</sup> i.e. the draft note to the French, Italian, and Japanese Ambassadors (No. 62).

## No. 65

### *Memorandum<sup>1</sup> from General Dawes to Mr. MacDonald*

[A 6250/30/45]

LONDON, *September 19, 1929*

The following telegram has been received from Washington, dated September 18, 6 p.m. (252):

Having now had time to examine carefully the complete draft of the invitation to a Naval Disarmament Conference proposed by Mr. MacDonald, I have conferred on the subject with the President. We are willing to yield to the Prime Minister's reasons for the immediate issue of such invitations and also to the date which he suggests. However, we have some very serious objections to the form of invitation proposed by him. According to your cable we believe it is a serious mistake to air the differences still remaining as a result of our negotiations before other nations. The letter from the President to me, which I sent you yesterday, must have made clear to you how important we think those differences are, and also the fact that unless there is a reduction in the aggregate 339,000 tons of the proposed cruiser fleet of Great Britain we cannot yield from our minimum position. It seems to us, therefore, that to state these differences will only have the effect of crystallizing on each side respectively public opinion and making more difficult any ultimate solution; furthermore, we believe that such a statement as that contained in paragraph (5) of the proposed draft of the invitation as to figures in American cruiser strength which the British Government would

<sup>1</sup> The telegram upon which this memorandum is based is printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1929*, vol. i, pp. 244-5.



accept would be resented intensely by the American press as an attempt on the part of the British Government to fix the size of the United States fleet and to mobilize in favour of its position world opinion.

We feel very clearly for these reasons that there should be omitted from the proposed invitation all reference to the differences remaining between America and Great Britain, and the invitation should reduce itself to a simple one to those other nations to meet with us in conference.

We have prepared a redraft of the Prime Minister's proposed invitation, in order to be of as much assistance as possible, basing it on his form but omitting the features which we think objectionable. This we trust will be of assistance to Mr. MacDonald.

To repeat what I told you over the telephone, no information has been given out, either by the President or by me, to the press in America during these negotiations as to the difference between us in the shape of figures. Such figures as have appeared in the press have been guesses merely and I repeat my hope that neither Mr. MacDonald nor you will permit yourselves to be misled into thinking that we will give out figures in the future without having given you full notice.

It has been our belief that if the time comes when it seems desirable to make any further public statement of the matters agreed upon between us, such a statement can then be made after mutual consultation, but it is our present strong feeling that the best time will not arrive for such a statement until after Mr. MacDonald's visit when the President and he have had ample opportunity to talk over public sentiment in both Great Britain and America.

## No. 66

### *American Draft of the proposed note of invitation to the Naval Conference*

[A 6430/30/45]

. . .<sup>1</sup> (c) The conversations have been one of the results of the Treaty for the Renunciation of War signed at Paris in 1928 which brought about a realignment of our national attitudes on the subject of security, in consequence of the provision that war should not be used as an instrument of national policy in the relations of nations one to another. Therefore, the Peace Pact has been regarded by both Governments as the starting-point of agreement.

(d) It has been agreed upon the principle of parity in each of the two fleets and that such parity shall be reached by December 31, 1936.

(e) The question of battleship strength was also touched upon during the conversations and both Governments are in agreement that, subject to

<sup>1</sup> The first two paragraphs of this revised draft are identical in substance with those in the draft note of September 17 (No. 62).

the assent of the other signatory Powers it would be desirable to reconsider the battleship replacement programs provided for in the Washington Treaty of 1922 with the view of diminishing the amount of replacement construction implied under that Treaty.

(f) Since both Governments adhere to the attitude that they have publicly adopted in regard to the desirability of securing the total abolition of the submarine, this matter hardly gave rise to discussion during the recent conversations. They recognise, however, that no final settlement on this subject can be reached except in conference with the other naval Powers. In view of the scope of these discussions the Government of the United States and His Majesty's Government consider it most desirable that a conference should be summoned to consider the categories not covered by the Washington Treaty and to study the questions which under the terms of the Washington Treaty would otherwise be discussed in the year 1931. It is our earnest hope that the (blank) Government will agree to the desirability of such a conference. His Majesty's Government and the Government of the United States are in accord that such a conference should be held in London at the beginning of the third week of January, 1930, and it is hoped that the (blank) Government will be willing to appoint representatives to attend it.

(g) A similar invitation is being addressed to the Governments of (blank) and the United States. I should be grateful if Your Excellency would cause the above invitation to be addressed to the (blank) Government.

(h) In the same way as the two Governments have kept Your Excellency informally *au courant* of the recent discussions, so now His Majesty's Government will be willing, in the interval before the proposed conference, to continue informal conversations with Your Excellency on any points which may require elucidation. The importance of reviewing the whole naval situation at an early date is so vital in the interests of general disarmament that I trust that Your Excellency's Government will see their way to accept this invitation and that the date proposed will be agreeable to them.

(i) It is hoped that at this conference the five principal naval Powers may be successful in reaching agreement as between themselves on all outstanding problems of naval disarmament and that by this means a text can be elaborated which will facilitate the task of the League of Nations Preparatory Commission and of the subsequent General Disarmament Conference. I should like to emphasise that His Majesty's Government have discovered no inclination in any quarter to set up new machinery for dealing with the naval disarmament question; on the contrary, there is a very general desire to look upon these negotiations as an effort on the part of the five naval Powers to carry out the invitation given to them by the President of the Preparatory Commission at the Conference in Geneva last spring to try to come to a naval agreement among themselves. Such an agreement as the five Powers may reach in the conference now proposed may then be used by the Preparatory Commission of the League of Nations as a foundation to facilitate its further endeavour.

*Letter from Mr. MacDonald to General Dawes*

[A 6260/30/15]

My dear General Dawes,

September 23, 1929

What I take as a personal letter from your President to myself has given me the greatest pleasure. Its candour is a proof of that trust which we must have in each other if we are to overcome the difficulties which face us. Moreover, its line of thought and its subject matter have been giving me concern and he may have some comfort in knowing that before his note came I had addressed enquiries to my advisers on some of the points he discusses. Further, it is just that line of country which I hope to go over with the President when I see him. I want no bargaining and that sort of thing, but primarily a *political* talk on the world situation so that our hands may be strengthened by an understanding of each other's problems and purposes.

But it will be helpful to both of us if I make a few comments with a view to carrying the President's letter a further stage.

The mind of our European neighbours who will be invited to the Five Power Conference is not tranquil but is suspicious that we are to come to some bargain with the United States against them. We have to walk warily lest we upset them, and they may decline to attend a Conference. Upon that I am now making private and unofficial enquiries, but their press is illuminating. The President is free of that troublesome part of my problems. It has been increased by the leakages which have come from Washington and which forced my hand and compelled me to prevent a stampede of the British press by seeing journalists much against my will. When I found the contents of my notes appearing here within two days of their receipt in Washington, it was like a net about my feet. I knew my statement might give trouble but on thinking it over concluded that it would be a puff of bad weather that would soon pass over us.

This parity business is of Satan himself. I am sure it has struck the President as it has me as being an attempt to clothe unreality in the garb of mathematical reality. Opinion in the United States demands it and the Senate will accept nothing which does not look like it. On my side I am not interested in it at all. I give it to you with both hands heaped and running down. When I am forced to scrutinise your programme which you say embodies it, I turn from you altogether and have to think of things which, but for my importunities, you would not think much about—viz. the fleets of other nations. Therefore, although in our talks with each other we assume that the discussion takes place between us two, that is really not the case. There are shadowy entities behind me. A spirit photograph would show you unaccompanied, but round me would be the ghosts of the other nations. In its ultimate the parity we are trying to devise is one between you and the rest of the world in relation to the British position in it. If the appearance

of parity is to be obtained, neither of us can get away from the fact that the standard must be fixed by British needs. The tides of events swelling upwards and downwards, backwards and forwards, change our defence problems every year and with that the figures change.

Now what am I trying to do? First and foremost, I am trying to stop the daily swell so that we may fix levels which cannot be exceeded and then create a confidence which will permit those levels to be steadily lowered. I want to substitute the security of peace for that of military preparation. But if in the lowering we act impatiently there will be a break back. That psychological fact fixes my present limits. Stabilisation downwards is the only road by which Europe will move to disarmament.

In consequence to [*sic*] this, the nearer our two countries come to an agreement the larger in my mind becomes the Five Power Conference and its results. Let me illustrate by referring to what the President says about three categories.

- (a) The First Class Battleships: our Admiralty, I believe, would be willing to agree to reduce the replacement ships from 35,000 tons to, say, 25,000, to reduce the calibre of their guns, to increase their age, and to propose that at the Conference. But I am warned that the offer will be rejected. Therefore it will not be the fault of Great Britain if that reduction is not made.
- (b) and (c) Destroyers and Submarines: I believe I should have no difficulty in closing at once with figures in the region of the President's proposals. But the tonnage in destroyers depends largely on the tonnage put by other Powers into submarines. I am warned that certain other Powers will not agree to a limitation in submarines. I might be willing to support something like the President's figures, but what can I do if the Five Power Conference were to reject them?

Under the geographical and political conditions of the British Empire, the cruiser category is that upon which public opinion can be most easily stampeded, and is also the chief concern of the Admiralty. When we came into office, we found a programme of considerable expansion being built on the ground that in view of the building of other Powers we were too weak. Three 8-inch cruisers were to be added at once, making 18. We stopped it, and that must be counted as reduction. We have stopped other expansions. The whole of my resistance to your proposal of 21 is that its effect upon other Powers will compel me to expand whether I like it or not. The Admiralty view is that it is not parity; the political view is that it inevitably means expansion. The narrow margin which divides us does not really lie between you and us but between both of us and the rest of the world. If by hook or by crook the United States could say regarding something like 30,000 tons, 'we shall not use them', or, 'we shall use them in such a way as not to have world repercussions' our agreement would be pretty complete.

Involved in this is a valuation of the relative efficiency of the 8-inch and the 6-inch cruiser. I find so far as I can lay my hands on discussions on the subject that in actual battle the relation is almost infinity; in the general

operations of war the relation is at least 4 to 1. I have had the relation implied in the President's figures worked out for my guidance and I find that they vary, but that his latest proposal is 10 to 3 in individual ships irrespective of guns and gross tonnage. Here there might be found a way of coming still nearer and critics could be silenced by naval opinion itself on the relative value of the two classes of ship.

The major difficulty is indeed with the 8-inch cruiser. If the three biggest Naval Powers would agree first of all to a ratio of 6, 5, 4 (18. 15. 12) that, as I am advised, would be a world equilibrium unless some of the other Powers disturbed it. But Japan wishes instead of two thirds of the larger cruiser fleet, 70 per cent., though, on an American force of 18, it might be induced to build no more than 12. It would certainly want more than 12 on 21, and then we should have to move up our figure of 15 by four or five and the whole plan would fall to the ground.

This is so important that I must emphasise it. If I had the shadow of dread that the United States and ourselves would ever be at war, it would be impossible for me to agree to parity being expressed by any number of 8-inch cruisers beyond our own—e.g. 15. I should be willing to refer the issue to any body of able and impartial authorities on sea warfare to decide between us and I should be assured of their verdict. But that is not in my mind at all. Everybody here is anxious to accommodate themselves to an agreement with you on the assumption that there will be no war and no interference in which our fleets are involved. But I am not justified in making the same assumption as regards the rest of the world, and Mr. Kellogg himself used language which justifies that. He referred to the possibilities of wars of defence. I may regret it, but he did it, and if I am to get Parliament to agree to our programmes I cannot at the moment overlook that fact.

As I am most anxious that the President should be fully aware of the facts as I have to look at them, let me refer to guns—a very important consideration so soon as our people examine the agreement in cold blood. On its 8-inch ships (assuming 21) the United States will carry a superiority of 75 guns and on our 6-inch ships our superiority would be 47 only—a very hard bit of mathematics for me to prove to be parity. Even on our proposals my task will not be easy, for they give the United States a superiority of forty-eight 8-inch guns to ours of 23 in 6-inch ones, but the numbers are substantially diminished.

I have spent every spare moment at Chequers this week-end trying to see daylight through this entanglement and the only conclusion I can come to is that if the United States insists upon more than eighteen 8-inch cruisers British expansion is inevitable, especially in view of the hostile reception which the 21 figure has received in both the French and the Japanese press.

Another point which the President has overlooked when he writes that on present proposals we shall have actually increased warship tonnage by 236,000 is that of that total 145,000 is new construction by the United States, whereas our addition of 91,000 is offset by 115,000 scrapped. This unsatis-

factory result arises from the fact that your ships actually built must be increased if you now put the parity agreement on the seas and do not accept it as something you can build up to if you think it is necessary. Again and again I have been driven back upon this fundamental difficulty. It is the insuperable problem and we must get round it somehow. I shall continue to work away at it but the peace of Chequers has yielded barren results. I am, however, looking forward with hope to continuing my ponderings with the President himself in the intervals of the all too generous hospitality which, according to the press, he is preparing for me.

Believe me, etc.,

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD

No. 68

*Memorandum by Sir R. Lindsay*

[A 6454/30/45]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 25, 1929*

In accordance with instructions which I received from the Prime Minister, I have asked the French, Italian, and Japanese Ambassadors to call here in regard to the discussions on naval disarmament. To each of them in turn I said that the Prime Minister would have invited them to call on him, himself, if he had not been very much pressed by work in the last days before starting for America. He wished me to emphasise to them once again how anxious he was that during the period which must elapse before the Five Power Naval Conference assembles in January, a continued exchange of views and suggestions might be followed between the various Powers with regard to the subject matter of the Conference. I said that the Prime Minister, when he returned, and the Foreign Office in the meanwhile, would be most happy to receive any suggestions they might have to make on behalf of their Governments, and that the Prime Minister hoped that in general the closest contact might be maintained in order that the ground should be thoroughly prepared for a successful issue. All three Ambassadors in turn asked me what was being done about the invitation to the Conference, of which the Prime Minister had already spoken to them, giving them a fairly clear idea of the general nature of the proposed note. I told each of them in turn what the state of affairs was, and gave them to understand that the invitation would be issued as soon as possible.

Both the French and Italian Ambassadors conveyed to me that they did not think that their Governments would be in a position to make any suggestions or ask any useful questions until they had received the actual invitation.

The French Ambassador expressed once again how much his Government would appreciate the fact that full importance is being given in the invitation

to the idea that the whole work of the Conference is to be included within the framework of the work of the League of Nations. He also said to me that a criticism of the present ideas, voiced largely by the French Naval authorities, was that sufficient allowance was not being made for the continual invention of new ideas in construction of war vessels and in the general perfection of instruments of war. He instanced again the new cruisers which the German Government is now building or projecting,<sup>1</sup> and he said that the only way of meeting this point was to return to the old French conception of limitation by global tonnage.

The Japanese Ambassador emphasised particularly the desire of his Government that the naval agreement should render possible a considerable reduction of the navies, and their apprehension lest the agreement might compel further constructions.<sup>2</sup> For this reason they were especially anxious that the number of American 8-inch cruisers should be fixed at 18 and not at 21.

Another point he made was that if some compensation had to be offered to the Americans in order to induce them to drop three of their 8-inch cruisers and bring the total down to 18, then that compensation should be taken out, not in three 6-inch cruisers of 10,000 tons each, but in four 6-inch cruisers of 7,500 tons each. He said that his Government was quite anxious to secure this point, if possible, because the introduction of the 10,000-ton 6-inch cruiser meant a new type which was likely to introduce new complications.

The Japanese Ambassador also referred to the desire of his Government to be allowed 70 per cent. of all auxiliary craft under the range of battleships. He said, however, that it was the desire of his Government, if they were given 70 per cent. of the American 8-inch cruisers, which would be more numerous than the British, then of the 6-inch cruisers they would only take 70 per cent. of the American tonnage and not count their 70 per cent. as applying to the British tonnage. In this way, he said, their tonnage of 6-inch cruisers would work out to something rather less than 50 per cent. of the British tonnage in that category. He stated this as the settled policy of his Government.

The Japanese Ambassador also said that his Government hoped that the Conference would take place at the end rather than at the beginning of January. I said that I had understood that they wanted three months' notice, and I had every hope that they would receive the invitation at a moment which would give them fully more than three months' notice and yet allow the Conference to meet in the middle of January. I said that I thought it would be very much more inconvenient for His Majesty's Government to have it at the end of the month than in the middle. The Ambassador did not press his point very strongly.

R. C. L.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 203, No. 141, note (1).

<sup>2</sup> In a telegram of September 18 Sir J. Tilley had reported press comment from Tokyo to this effect.

*Revised draft of the proposed note of invitation to the Naval Conference*<sup>1</sup>

[A 6430/30/45]

*French Ambassador.*

*Italian Ambassador.*

*Japanese Ambassador.*

Your Excellency,

I have the honour to inform Your Excellency that . . . .<sup>2</sup>

. . . (2) It has been agreed to adopt the principle of parity and that such parity shall be reached by December 31st, 1936. Consultation between His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and His Majesty's Governments in the Dominions has taken place and it is contemplated that the programme of parity on the British side should be related to naval forces of all parts of the Empire.

(3) The question of battleship strength was also touched upon during the conversations and it has been agreed in these conversations that subject to the assent of other signatory Powers it would be desirable to reconsider the battleship replacement programmes provided for in the Washington Treaty of 1922 including the factors of the size of ships and the calibre of guns with the view of diminishing the amount of replacement construction implied under that Treaty.

(4) Since both the Government of the United States and His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom adhere to the attitude that they have publicly adopted in regard to the desirability of securing the total abolition of the submarine, this matter hardly gave rise to discussion during the recent conversations. They recognise, however, that no final settlement on this subject can be reached except in conference with other naval Powers.

In view of the scope of these discussions both Governments consider it most desirable that a conference should be summoned to consider the categories not covered by the Washington Treaty and to study the questions which under the terms of the Washington Treaty would otherwise be discussed in the year 1931. It is our earnest hope that the (French) (Italian) (Japanese) Government will agree to the desirability of such a conference. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the Government of the United States are in accord that such a conference should be held in London at the beginning of the third week of January, 1930, and it is hoped that the (French) (Italian) (Japanese) Government will be willing to appoint representatives to attend it.

A similar invitation is being addressed to the Governments of (Italy, Japan) (France, Japan) (France, Italy) and the United States; and His Majesty's

<sup>1</sup> This draft, after acceptance by His Majesty's Governments in the Dominions, was given to General Dawes on September 27.

<sup>2</sup> The paragraphs omitted are identical with the text of the letter as finally dispatched (No. 75).



Governments in the Dominions are being asked to appoint representatives to take part in the Conference. I should be grateful if Your Excellency would cause the above invitation to be addressed to the (French) (Italian) (Japanese) Government.

In the same way as the two Governments have kept Your Excellency informally *au courant* of the recent discussions, so now His Majesty's Government will be willing, in the interval before the proposed conference, to continue informal conversations with Your Excellency on any points which may require elucidation. The importance of reviewing the whole naval situation at an early date is so vital in the interests of general disarmament that I trust that Your Excellency's Government will see their way to accept this invitation and that the date proposed will be agreeable to them. . . .<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The concluding paragraph of the note is identical with the text of the letter as finally dispatched (No. 75).

## No. 70

*Mr. A. Henderson to Mr. Craigie (R.M.S. 'Berengaria' at sea)*  
*Unnumbered. Telegraphic [A 6570/30/15]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, October 2, 1929

A message has been received from the United States Ambassador to the effect that from conversations which he had on September 30 he was more than ever impressed with the necessity of issuing invitations to France, Italy and Japan with the least possible delay, above all before the Prime Minister reaches Washington. General Dawes feels that the issue of invitations *after* a meeting with President Hoover would make it appear to the other Powers that the Anglo-American negotiations had proceeded too far before they had been invited to join in the discussions.

The *démarche*, which was not made on instructions from Washington, appears to have been inspired by the Japanese Ambassador, who, until he saw Sir Victor Wellesley<sup>1</sup> two days ago *after* speaking to his American colleague, did not know that it was hoped to issue invitations on October 7.

In the meantime, the United States Government have suggested three amendments<sup>2</sup> to the draft note, the most important of which is the deletion of the words 'including the factors of the size of ships and the calibre of guns' the insertion of which, it is alleged, would cause unnecessary discussion *at this time*.

It is also suggested that the words 'in each of the several categories' should be inserted in sub-section 2 after the words 'principle of parity'; and further that the first sentence of paragraph 3 proper<sup>3</sup> of the draft should read as follows: 'In view of the scope of these discussions both Governments consider

<sup>1</sup> Deputy Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>2</sup> These amendments were received on September 30.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. the paragraph beginning 'In view of the scope . . .'

it most desirable that a conference should be summoned to consider the categories not covered by the Washington treaty and to arrange for and deal with the questions covered by the second paragraph of Article 21 of that treaty.'

We have consulted the Admiralty, who have asked that it should be clearly explained to the Prime Minister that the acceptance of these alterations in the note might, in their opinion, preclude us from proposing a reduction in the size of battleships at the conference. Admiralty feel that amendments now suggested indicate an attempt by the United States to deprive us of the opportunity to take action in the above sense and further that as it is hoped by reducing the size of battleships to effect a saving of millions and make a real advance towards disarmament, this is not a question we should allow to go by default.

Admiralty also consider it essential that the other Powers should be afforded fullest possible notice of our intention to raise this issue or they will be unprepared to deal with it. In these circumstances and in the light of the immediately preceding paragraph, Admiralty are strongly of opinion that if the United States cannot agree to retain the words 'including the factors of the size of ships and calibre of guns' the following sentence should be inserted in paragraph 3 proper of the draft note after 'conference' and before 'His Majesty's': 'His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom propose to suggest, for the consideration of such a conference, the reduction in the maximum size of capital ships and the guns they carry.'

It will be appreciated that if further discussions are to take place with the United States over the wording of the note, it will not be possible to issue invitations on October 7 unless the Prime Minister takes this up with the President immediately on arrival.

I would emphasise that the Admiralty cannot reconcile the view that the note as now amended by the United States leaves it open to us to raise the question with the disinclination of the United States to have this point specifically mentioned in the invitation.

We should be glad of the Prime Minister's directions as soon as possible especially as regards the issue of invitations on Monday October 7.

## No. 71

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir E. Howard (Washington)*

*No. 489 Telegraphic [A 6576/30/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 3, 1929*

We have reason to suppose that the United States Government are by no means satisfied with a British fleet strength of 339,000 tons and that they will probably make every effort to obtain a reduction on these figures.

Please show this telegram to Sir R. Vansittart and Mr. Craigie for the information of the Prime Minister.

## No. 72

*Mr. Craigie to Mr. A. Henderson (Received October 4, 1929)*

*Unnumbered. Telegraphic [A 6598/30/45]*

S.S. BERENGARIA, October 3, 1929

Your telegram of yesterday.<sup>1</sup>

Prime Minister has never fully appreciated reasons for Admiralty insistence on inclusion of words 'including factors etc.' He considers we should be in a worse position if he takes point up with President of the United States and meets with a firm refusal to agree to insert. Our hands would be freer without such previous consultation. Instead of these words Prime Minister wishes to insert at end of penultimate paragraph after word 'them' 'His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom propose to communicate with you in due course their views as to subjects which they think should be discussed at Conference and they would be glad to receive a corresponding communication from the French etc. Government'.

Prime Minister considers above sentence coupled with American reference to 'discussion *at this time*' substantially safeguards our position and meets Admiralty points about notice. We do not quite understand objection to proposed American reference to second paragraph of article 21 of Washington treaty which does not appear wider in scope than our present wording and has advantage of greater precision. It should in fact facilitate discussion of size of battleships, etc. In any case Prime Minister desires that whole field should be covered.

No objection to remaining amendment.

Prime Minister would be glad if you would arrange after consultation with United States Ambassador for issue at earliest possible moment of invitations so amended namely acceptance of American amendments and inclusion of sentence quoted above.

Prime Minister would like notice the day before despatch of note.

<sup>1</sup> No. 70.

## No. 73

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir E. Howard (Washington)*

*No. 495 Telegraphic [A 6598/30/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, October 4, 1929

Mr. Craigie's telegram of October 3 from the *Berengaria* (naval disarmament).<sup>1</sup>

Copy of the draft note embodying the amendment desired by the Prime Minister was handed to Mr. Atherton this morning. The latter intimated that it would be necessary to consult the Department of State and that this

<sup>1</sup> No. 72.

action would be taken by telegraph without delay. He hoped to let us have an affirmative reply this evening.

We will keep you informed by telegraph of all developments. If, as we hope, the amendment is acceptable to the United States Government, arrangements will be made for the issue of the invitations on Monday October 7.

#### No. 74

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir E. Howard (Washington)*

*No. 498 Telegraphic [A 6598/30/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 5, 1929*

My telegram No. 495 (of October 4, Naval disarmament).<sup>1</sup>

United States Government concur in the amendment desired by the Prime Minister and the invitations will be issued on Monday.

Official notes will be accompanied by semi-official notifications to the French, Italian and Japanese Ambassadors that we propose to publish the text of the invitation in the morning press of Wednesday. We do not consider it advisable to publish the notes before there has been time for them to reach their destinations, but we feel equally strongly that publication should not be delayed beyond Wednesday.

<sup>1</sup> No. 73.

#### No. 75

*Note of invitation to the Naval Conference<sup>1</sup>*

*[A 6598/30/45]*

Your Excellency,

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 7, 1929*

I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the informal conversations on the subject of naval disarmament which have been proceeding in London during the last three months between the Prime Minister and the Ambassador of the United States have now reached a stage at which it is possible to say that there is no point outstanding of such serious importance as to prevent an agreement.

From time to time the Prime Minister has notified your Excellency of the progress made in these discussions, and I now have the honour to state that provisional and informal agreement has been reached on the following principles:—

1. The conversations have been one of the results of the Treaty for the Renunciation of War, signed at Paris in 1928, which brought about a realignment of our national attitudes on the subject of security, in con-

<sup>1</sup> This note was addressed to the French, Italian, and Japanese Ambassadors in London. The text of the note was published on October 9.

sequence of the provision that war should not be used as an instrument of national policy in the relations of nations one to another. Therefore, the Peace Pact has been regarded as the starting-point of agreement.

2. It has been agreed to adopt the principle of parity in each of the several categories, and that such parity shall be reached by the 31st December, 1936. Consultation between His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and His Majesty's Governments in the Dominions has taken place, and it is contemplated that the programme of parity on the British side should be related to the naval forces of all parts of the Empire.

3. The question of battleship strength was also touched upon during the conversations, and it has been agreed in these conversations that, subject to the assent of other signatory Powers, it would be desirable to reconsider the battleship replacement programmes provided for in the Washington Treaty of 1922, with the view to diminishing the amount of replacement construction implied under that treaty.

4. Since both the Government of the United States and His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom adhere to the attitude that they have publicly adopted in regard to the desirability of securing the total abolition of the submarine, this matter hardly gave rise to discussion during the recent conversations. They recognise, however, that no final settlement on this subject can be reached except in conference with the other naval Powers.

In view of the scope of these discussions, both Governments consider it most desirable that a conference should be summoned to consider the categories not covered by the Washington Treaty and to arrange for and deal with the questions covered by the second paragraph of article 21 of that treaty. It is our earnest hope that the (French) (Italian) (Japanese) Government will agree to the desirability of such a conference. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the Government of the United States are in accord that such a conference should be held in London at the beginning of the third week of January 1930, and it is hoped that the (French) (Italian) (Japanese) Government will be willing to appoint representatives to attend it.

A similar invitation is being addressed to the Governments of (France) (Italy) (Japan) and the United States, and His Majesty's Governments in the Dominions are being asked to appoint representatives to take part in the conference. I should be grateful if your Excellency would cause the above invitation to be addressed to the (French) (Italian) (Japanese) Government.

In the same way as the two Governments have kept your Excellency informally *au courant* of the recent discussions, so now His Majesty's Government will be willing, in the interval before the proposed conference, to continue informal conversations with your Excellency on any points which may require elucidation. The importance of reviewing the whole naval situation at an early date is so vital in the interests of general disarmament that I trust that your Excellency's Government will see their way to accept this invitation and that the date proposed will be agreeable to them. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom propose to communicate

to you in due course their views as to the subjects which they think should be discussed at the conference, and will be glad to receive a corresponding communication from the (French) (Italian) (Japanese) Government.

It is hoped that at this conference the principal naval Powers may be successful in reaching agreement. I should like to emphasise that His Majesty's Government have discovered no inclination in any quarter to set up new machinery for dealing with the naval disarmament question; on the contrary, it is hoped that by this means a text can be elaborated which will facilitate the task of the League of Nations Preparatory Commission and of the subsequent General Disarmament Conference.

I have, &c.

ARTHUR HENDERSON

No. 76

*Mr. A. Henderson to General Dawes*

[A 6598/30/45]

Your Excellency,

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 7, 1929*

I have the honour to transmit to your Excellency herewith copies of the notes<sup>1</sup> which I am to-day addressing to the French, Italian and Japanese Ambassadors in London inviting the French, Italian and Japanese Governments to participate in a Five-Power Conference to deal with the question of naval disarmament, which it is proposed to hold in London in the latter part of January next.

2. As I understand that the Government of the United States concur in the terms of the enclosed notes, I shall be grateful if your Excellency will be so good as to confirm my impression that they will find it possible to participate in the conference above mentioned.

I have, &c.

ARTHUR HENDERSON

<sup>1</sup> No. 75.

## CHAPTER II

# Mr. MacDonald's visit to the United States: Correspondence regarding the Five-Power Conference (October 4, 1929-January 21, 1930)

No. 77

*Memorandum by Mr. MacDonald respecting his Conversations with President Hoover at Washington (October 4 to 10, 1929)*<sup>1</sup>

### I. NAVAL QUESTION

We covered the whole field in a full and frank discussion, and endeavoured to eliminate all points that seemed likely to divide us at the Five-Power Conference.

#### BATTLESHIPS

I outlined our proposals, namely, reduction of maximum displacement of units of 35,000 tons to 25,000 tons, reduction of gun calibre from 16 inches to 12 inches, and increase of age from 20 to 26 years. The President said that the United States did not wish to construct any more battleships before 1936, because many naval officers believed that the days of the battleship were numbered owing to the development of aircraft, and he saw no point in putting vast sums into engines of war which might afterwards have to be scrapped as useless. In reply to my objection that a building holiday up to 1936 would lead to dislocation in the yards, to a sudden spurt of building after 1936, and to the retention in our fleet of vessels over 30 years of age, Mr. Hoover declared that he did not wish to replace these ships at all when they became too old for use; would we not be prepared to reduce the number of battleships specified in the Washington Treaty? I replied that my naval advisers were, I believed, opposed to any reduction in the number of battleships, and again urged the advantages of reducing the size of replacement ships. I pointed out that by extending the age limit we should be *ipso facto* reducing the number of replacements before 1936.

In subsequent conversations at the State Department, Mr. Craigie discovered that the United States might in the last resort be induced to accept our proposal for a reduction to 25,000 tons, provided that they were first allowed to build one 35,000-ton ship to compensate them for our possession of

<sup>1</sup> This memorandum was circulated to the Cabinet by direction of Mr. MacDonald. The conversations summarized in the memorandum took place (unless otherwise stated) at Mr. Hoover's residence on the Rapidan river on October 6. Sir R. Vansittart, Mr. Craigie, Mr. Stimson, and, after 2.30 p.m., Mr. Cotton were also present.

the *Hood* (41,000 tons) and the *Nelson* and *Rodney* (35,000 tons each). In other words, the Navy Board would undoubtedly refuse to come down to 25,000 tons for future ships as long as they felt that we had a decided advantage in the size of *existing* battleships. As regards the 16-inch gun, the State Department feared that the Navy Board would be adamant, as they considered that the possession of this gun gave them a valuable advantage over the navies of third Powers.

The above shows, I think, that elements favourable to a compromise are present and that there is no likelihood of any serious divergence between the two Powers in regard to this category of ship when the Five-Power Conference meets.

### CRUISERS

We proceeded to discuss the cruiser problem in all its aspects and one new point of some importance emerged: the President had found that it was easier to bring the Navy Board to extend the yardstick in our favour by the use of the age factor than by the use of any other factor, and anything we could do by way of retaining one or two more of our older cruisers after 1936 would, he observed, greatly assist in bridging the gap represented by the 30,000 tons of 8-inch tonnage. For every 6-inch gun cruiser that we retained of 20 years' service and over it would be possible for the United States to allow a very considerable discount in our favour—a discount of 50 per cent. being mentioned during the conversations. Mr. Hoover hoped that, in view of our great need of cruisers for purely 'police' functions we might still find it possible to retain a larger number of older cruisers for 'police' purposes.

The President appeared as anxious as we were to get the American figure for 8-inch cruisers down to 18, but saw no way of doing this as long as we insisted on 339,000 tons of cruiser tonnage and a replacement programme of 14 ships. At the beginning of our conversation on this point Mr. Hoover took up the line that it would be impossible for him to get any further concession out of His Navy Board, but I gradually brought him to see that there could be no question at all of the gap being bridged simply by concessions on our part. At the end of our full and frank discussion, the President made it clear that he would meet us at least half way if we, on our side, could devise some means of helping in the elimination of this 30,000 tons. I should like to say here that the making of any substantial concession from the United States towards bridging the gap will depend mainly on the personal influence of the President, and the degree of pressure which he will exercise in this direction must depend in turn on his being kept in the frame of mind in which he was when we left Washington. Any refusal to discuss at the appropriate time such questions as belligerent rights at sea and naval stations would have been seriously detrimental to our arriving ultimately at a full agreement with the United States at the Five-Power Conference.

It was decided that both sides should continue to examine ways and means by which this remaining gap might be bridged. We both realised that, even if a full agreement on the cruiser question were possible at this stage, its an-



nouncement would further arouse the sensibilities of other Powers. It was, in fact, desirable to retain a certain elasticity.

#### DESTROYERS

The President welcomed my assurance that we would be prepared to come down to 150,000 tons of destroyer tonnage if the submarine fleet of other Powers were to be sufficiently reduced to make this possible. This figure would, he said, be acceptable to the United States. I warned him that if the French insisted on retaining the 90,000 tons of submarine tonnage now projected, our Admiralty considered it would be necessary to raise our destroyer tonnage to 200,000.

#### SUBMARINES

The United States would be prepared to come down to our present tonnage of 50,000 tons. It was subsequently stated at the State Department that the United States would have no objection to Japan retaining 70,000 tons of submarines if she wished, and a concession to Japan on this point might be held in reserve to help us over the cruiser difficulty.

#### AIRCRAFT CRUISERS<sup>1</sup>

It was suggested at the State Department, after our return to Washington, that our Admiralty might be disposed to consider the reduction of the total tonnage for aircraft cruisers<sup>1</sup> in the Washington Treaty from 135,000 tons to, say, 120,000 tons. The maximum unit displacement at present stood at 25,000, and it was further suggested at the State Department that a minimum unit displacement for these vessels should also be fixed so as to prevent them from dropping down into the cruiser class and so disturbing the delicate adjustments which we are endeavouring to secure.

#### TEN PER CENT. TRANSFER BETWEEN CATEGORIES

The United States Government would be quite agreeable to this, though they thought the French would probably ask for more than 10 per cent. The transfer would have to be arranged in such a way as not to disturb the adjustments made to secure parity.

#### JAPANESE DELEGATES TO THE CONFERENCE

In order to allay Japanese suspicions and to try to compose outstanding differences, the President said he was anxious to invite one or more of the Japanese delegates to come to Washington on the way to London, provided we saw no objection. I said that there could be no possible objection to the course proposed.

<sup>1</sup> This word should read 'Carriers'.

## II. RIGHTS AND IMMUNITIES AT SEA IN TIME OF WAR

The President drew attention to the view widely held in the United States that good relations between the two countries could never be fully established until the problems associated with the capture of property at sea in time of war had been squarely faced. One of the most prominent supporters of this theory was Senator Borah, who remained of the opinion that the question of 'the freedom of the seas' should be tackled before the conclusion of an agreement on naval disarmament. Mr. Hoover hinted, although he did not say it in so many words, that Mr. Borah's support was necessary (and there is little doubt that this is so) to enable any reasonable agreement on naval disarmament to pass through the Senate, and that, to secure this support, some approach to the subject of maritime rights would have to be made. Furthermore, the Naval Construction Act contained a clause inviting the President to negotiate treaties on this subject with other Powers before the meeting of the Naval Conference which, under the Washington Naval Treaty, was to be held in 1931. This conference was now to be held in January 1930 instead of August 1931. Mr. Hoover admitted that this provision in the Act was not mandatory upon him—nevertheless, he could not possibly afford to ignore it altogether. It was clear that the President and the Secretary of State realised the dangers and difficulties surrounding this question, but they felt impelled to suggest that the whole matter should be examined by a body of jurists representative of the important Naval Powers, who should conduct a thorough enquiry and report their views as to any 'possible or constructive' method of reaching a settlement. Mr. Hoover then developed at some length his scheme that, as part of such a settlement, ships laden exclusively with food supplies should be declared immune from capture in time of war and thus placed in the same category as hospital ships or ships carrying medical supplies. This idea has long been in his mind, and is the direct outcome of his own experiences and activities during the war. The importance of this psychological factor may be noted in passing.

Seeing that the conservation of the food supplies of the United Kingdom in time of war was one of the principal preoccupations of every British Government, the President suggested that a general treaty prohibiting the capture of food supplies should prove to be of great value to us and should assist the progress of naval disarmament.

In reply, I drew attention to the risks involved in raising this question, particularly before the naval question had been safely got out of the way. A committee appointed by the late Government had been examining the whole subject, and had found it replete with dangers and complexities of every sort. To touch it now might mean sacrificing much that had recently been achieved in other directions. As regards the food-ships scheme, I said I would be quite prepared to look into it carefully, but I warned him that, judging by the information at present available, some at least of my advisers at home were likely to be opposed to it, on the ground that the cutting off of food supplies had long been regarded as a perfectly legitimate and a very powerful method

of applying naval pressure. The application of this method of pressure might prove one day to be a necessary part of the measures to be taken by the Powers of the world against a Power or Powers guilty of going to war in defiance of the Kellogg Pact. Furthermore, even if a practicable method could be found of safeguarding food-ships from attack from the air while in port—of which I was by no means sure—there remained the difficulty that such a treaty would presumably have no guarantee behind it. In other words, a treaty breaker would not apparently be subject to any international sanction. Lastly, the question of an apparent conflict with Article 16 of the Covenant of the League would have to be considered.

Mr. Hoover declared that it was very unlikely that the world would ever agree to another food blockade, whatever the provocation offered. Moreover, even after the conclusion of such a treaty, signatory States would remain free to close their frontiers to the export of food-stuffs to an outlaw State. As regards attack from the air while the food-ship was in a port of one of the belligerents, this could be overcome by assigning certain ports or sections of ports to the handling of food-ships only, and the ships would, of course, have a distinctive marking in the same way as hospital ships. On the point of a guarantee Mr. Hoover was only able to say that it was not reasonable to suppose that the United States, having itself taken the initiative in securing the conclusion of such a Treaty, would stand aside and watch the violation with indifference. Finally, Mr. Hoover hinted that the conclusion of a Treaty rendering food-ships immune from capture would probably make it unnecessary to proceed any further into this complex problem of the rights of neutrals and belligerents. This, I think, is also certainly in the minds of the Secretary of State and his department.

As the President was keenly insistent on the food-ships proposal, I give his arguments fully so that the Cabinet may be aware of them. They are expressed in the following memorandum communicated to me privately and unofficially before I left Washington:—

‘The President has made the informal suggestion that food-ships should be made free of any interference in times of war, thus removing starvation of women and children from the weapons of warfare and decreasing the necessity for naval arms for protection of the overseas lanes of food supplies. His suggestion would place all vessels laden solely with food supplies on the same footing as hospital ships.

‘He expressed the view that the rapid growth of industrial civilisation during the past half-century has created in many countries populations far in excess of their domestic food supply, and thus steadily weakened their natural defences. As a consequence, protection for overseas supplies has been one of the impelling causes of increasing naval armaments and military alliances. Again, in countries which produce surplus food, their economic stability is also to a considerable degree dependent upon keeping open the avenues of their trade in the export of such surplus, and this again stimulates armament on their part to protect such outlets. Thus, the fear of an interruption in seaborne food supplies has powerfully tended towards

naval development in both importing and exporting nations. And in all important wars of recent years to cut off or to protect such supplies has formed a large element in the strategy of all combatants. He expressed the belief that the world must sooner or later realise this as one of the underlying causes of its armed situation. And, further, that steps should be taken that starvation should not be included among the weapons of warfare. He felt that definite organisation under neutral auspices for protection of food movements in time of war would constitute a most important contribution to the rights of parties, whether neutrals or belligerents, and would greatly tend toward lessening the pressure for naval strength.

‘The President recognises that such a suggestion could become practicable only by world-wide revision of existing treaties and the international understandings among many nations, and only after further realignment of world thought which should flow from the Paris Peace Pact.’

Seeing that the President and his Administration were evidently of opinion that the question of the freedom of the seas must now be raised in one form or another, and that, if we adopted a *non possumus* attitude, we should shortly be faced with the summoning of an international conference or commission of jurists, I acted on the recommendation in Section 70, paragraphs (i), (j) and (k), of the Belligerent Rights Committee’s Report of the 6th March, 1929, to the effect that, should the raising of this question prove inevitable, an endeavour should be made to enter into preliminary private conversations on the subject with the United States Government. For convenience of reference I quote these paragraphs below:—

‘(i) Finally, rather than take part in an International Conference, we should be prepared to enter into a Treaty with the United States on the basis of their existing Naval Instructions.

(j) If an International Conference should prove unavoidable, a Conference composed of the five great Naval Powers would be preferable.

(k) In either event, an endeavour should be made to enter into private and confidential conversations with the United States Government in the hope of harmonising beforehand, as far as possible, the views of the two Governments. In any case, it should be made clear to the United States Government that this country will refuse to enter upon any negotiations or Conference having for their object a revision as opposed to a recodification of maritime law.’

In pursuance of this recommendation I said I was quite prepared to go into the whole subject carefully when I returned home, but that, if the matters were to be discussed internationally, the right method would be to begin by preliminary and informal discussions between our two Governments on the lines of the recent naval conversations. Even such discussions should be postponed at least until after the Five-Power Naval Conference. After some hesitation, Mr. Hoover agreed on the first point, though he added that separate conversations on this subject between the United States and Great Britain were likely to arouse suspicious criticism in many quarters, both in the United States and abroad. He agreed that actual discussions

might be postponed until after the Five-Power Conference, but declared that, if he was to carry with him Senator Borah and others who shared the Senator's views—and it should be clearly realised that relations are at all points strained between the President and the Senator, who is chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations—it was important to issue a statement during my visit to the effect that we were ready to discuss this question at the appropriate time.

We accordingly drafted a formula for communication to the press which was conveyed to the Foreign Office in Sir E. Howard's telegram No. 493 of the 6th October (Appendix A, No. 1). I should have preferred that Mr. Hoover's plan for the immunity of the food-ship should not have emerged at that moment, but he was evidently quite determined to put it forward at some early date, and it was obvious that if I objected to its appearing in any form in our proposed communiqué there was a danger of its being issued in a more objectionable form after I had left the United States. This formula merely committed us to examine fully and frankly the question of 'rights and immunities at sea during war.' It committed us to nothing at all so far as the food-ship plan was concerned. To have refused to go even so far as this would have meant greatly increasing the risk of the President's reverting to the idea of a general International Conference on the subject at large.

In view of the strong exception taken by some of my colleagues and by the Chiefs of Staff to the formula as drafted, I succeeded subsequently in securing Mr. Hoover's reluctant assent to the elimination of his unilateral statement in regard to food-ships. But this did not entirely satisfy my colleagues, and, on receipt of a telephonic advice of the purport of Foreign Office telegram No. 515 of the 9th October (see Appendix A, No. 11), which was on its way, I decided to inform the President that, after consulting my Cabinet, I had reached the conclusion that it would be very inadvisable for any overt reference to this subject to be made in our joint communiqué. I repeated my promise to go into the whole subject on my return to London, and said I would be prepared, after this preliminary examination had been completed, to discuss the matter informally with the United States Government.

Mr. Hoover and Colonel Stimson were clearly chagrined and disappointed by this decision. They pointed out, with considerable force, that the fact of this question having been discussed was bound to leak out, since we could not issue any categorical denial to the questions which would inevitably be asked. We should, so to speak, be missing the great advantage of making a joint announcement at the present most favourable psychological moment without in any way modifying the position or altering the course of subsequent events. They recognised, however, the difficulty of my position at such a distance from home and eventually agreed, with a reasonably good grace, to the omission of any specific reference to the maritime rights issue. The text of the communiqué as finally issued is annexed as Appendix B.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. The communiqué was published in the press on October 10.

I noticed in the telegrams from London that reference is made more than once to an understanding that this question of the rights of belligerents at sea would not be discussed during my stay at Washington. I am not aware of any such understanding so far as the United States Government are concerned, nor would the ruling out of this question in advance have been in accord with the spirit of frank and free discussion which was to characterise my visit to the United States. It is true that I had no intention of raising this issue myself, and that I had no notice that it would be raised, but there was no obligation on the President not to raise it nor could I possibly have refused to listen to what he had to say on the subject. I was unprepared to discuss this thorny subject in any detail, nor was this proposed either by Mr. Hoover or Colonel Stimson. But, once I discovered that the United States Government felt bound to raise it in some form, the best course was clearly that recommended by the Belligerent Rights Committee, namely, to restrict discussion as far as possible to a preliminary exchange of views between the two Governments. I sympathise with my colleagues in having had to face this complex subject at such short notice, and I fully recognise their difficulty in agreeing within the time available to the issue of a communiqué which, in other circumstances, would have been psychologically, politically and diplomatically desirable, and which would, in point of fact, have made little change in a situation that must in any case be faced. It is now common knowledge that this issue was raised during the Washington conversations, and will shortly emerge again in one form or another. Rightly or wrongly the question has in the United States come to be closely associated with the question of naval disarmament, and it is useless for us to proceed as if no such association did in fact exist. The issue must now be faced, and our best course is so to arrange matters that we face it under conditions as favourable as possible to ourselves.

### III. BRITISH NAVAL STATIONS IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

In introducing this subject the President observed that our naval stations in proximity to the United States had been made the pretext for a good deal of hostile propaganda against the idea of a naval agreement with the British Empire. Those who were opposed to an understanding alleged that the possession of these naval stations gave to the Empire a great strategical advantage of which account should be taken in any naval agreement, and the reiteration of this view by those favouring a big American navy had undoubtedly had its effect in the country as a whole. No responsible authority in the United States regarded these stations as a real menace to the United States, but there was a great deal of misapprehension on the subject in the popular mind, and the chances of a satisfactory agreement on the naval question would undoubtedly be improved if this controversy surrounding those naval stations could be stilled once for all. Mr. Hoover said that, if His Majesty's Government would be prepared to declare that Great Britain

had no intention of causing her stations in the Western Hemisphere to be a menace to the United States, the United States Government would make a similar declaration in regard to their stations in the Eastern Hemisphere. Mr. Hoover admitted frankly that this *quid pro quo* would be of little use to us, except as a matter of form, because the United States had only one naval station in the Eastern Hemisphere, namely, Corregidor, in the Philippines, and this was already covered by article 19 of the Treaty of 1922 for the Limitation of Naval Armament. He hoped that, nevertheless, we would consider the matter carefully.

I replied that our naval stations at Bermuda and in the Caribbean were only fortified to the extent necessary to defend them against raiders or a weak force, and could not by any flight of the imagination be regarded as a menace to the United States. Nevertheless, I took note of what the President had said about the use which was being made of the existence of these stations by those who were opposed to a naval agreement. We had, of course, no intention of so modifying the existing fortifications or establishments as to turn them into a menace to the United States, and I did not believe there could be any serious objection to placing this absence of intention on record. But I thought that we ought to begin with a definite statement from the American side that these stations were not regarded at present as a menace by the Government of the United States. Mr. Hoover promised to secure a statement to this effect from the United States Navy Board, though he added somewhat grimly that this would probably be no easy task. He proved, indeed, to be right, and several days of wrestling were necessary to extract from them a grudging admission that Bermuda and Jamaica constituted 'no *appreciable* menace' to the United States. This incident illustrates the mentality with which the President and the Secretary of State have to cope.

When the question of Halifax was mentioned, I said that this was a matter for the Canadian Government, and I could not anticipate at all what their view would be. The Caribbean and the Canadian naval stations seemed to me to be in quite separate categories, and the difficulty as regards the latter appeared to be that Canada might reasonably expect some corresponding declaration from the American side in regard to naval stations in the United States in proximity to the Canadian-United States frontier. On this latter point, it was intimated to me that there was little prospect of any declaration being forthcoming in regard to United States naval stations in the Western Hemisphere.

A formula was accordingly drafted which limited the scope of the declaration to the naval stations of *Great Britain* in the Western Hemisphere and to those of the United States in the Eastern Hemisphere. This formula was transmitted to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in Sir E. Howard's telegram No. 493 of the 6th October (Appendix A, No. 1). It was subsequently modified in an endeavour to take account of objections raised by the Chiefs of Staff in Mr. Henderson's telegram No. 505 of the 8th October (Appendix A, No. 5), but, as the Chiefs of Staff still appeared to be opposed to any public

declaration, I decided that the matter must wait over until I had returned to London and had had an opportunity of explaining more fully to my colleagues than was possible by telegram the purpose and scope of what was proposed.

As in the case of the maritime rights, so in the case of the naval stations question, Mr. Hoover was greatly disappointed that no public declaration could be made on this subject at the termination of my visit to Washington. Psychologically speaking, an opportunity for producing the maximum of effect in the United States has been missed. Nevertheless, the wording of the formula was clearly a matter which required care and deliberation, and I came to the conclusion that, on balance, the greater advantage lay in postponing the matter until I had been able to consult more fully with my colleagues and the Chiefs of Staff.

#### IV. CO-OPERATIVE ACTION FOR THE REINFORCEMENT OF WORLD PEACE

President Hoover introduced the above subject at an early stage in our proceedings at Rapidan. Instancing the recent examples of the Bolivia-Paraguay and the Russo-Chinese disputes, he observed that efforts by other Powers to intervene in such disputes in order to prevent their assuming serious proportions or in order to circumscribe the area affected were usually regarded by the disputants as an unwarranted interference. Some further machinery was needed to give the more pacific Powers a *locus standi* for exercising a restraining influence on their more unruly neighbours. Although he did not say so, I think President Hoover had particularly in mind States which either did not belong to the League of Nations or which, if belonging, were for one reason or another less subject to League influence than are the majority of European States. What was wanted, Mr. Hoover thought, was some means of 'reinforcing the machinery for the pacific settlement of controversies'. To this end he suggested the addition to the Treaty for the Renunciation of War of a third article providing that, in the event of any controversy occurring in which a satisfactory settlement is not reached as the result of direct negotiation or of a recourse to arbitration, the matter should be investigated by a commission, to be selected by the parties to the controversy, composed of the parties themselves and of a number of impartial members. The function of this commission would be to examine all the facts concerning the controversy, to endeavour to conciliate the divergence of view and to publish the facts. The article would further provide that a suggestion made by States not parties to the dispute for the putting into force of the above procedure would not be considered as an unfriendly act. Mr. Hoover laid down the axiom—an interesting one when proceeding from a President of the United States—that all nations have a legitimate interest in the preservation of peace and that all are injured by a breach of the peace. The President maintained that his proposal differed from existing forms of conciliation machinery in that it provided an additional step—a



stage for voluntary action by the parties to the controversy in virtue of their acknowledgment of the new basis for international relations established by the Pact of Peace.

I expressed great interest in this proposal, but pointed out that as it stood it would appear to conflict with the Covenant of the League. The matter was discussed at considerable length, but it became clear as the discussion proceeded that the President's advisers—and especially Mr. Clotton, the Under-Secretary of State—were far from convinced that the people of the United States would be prepared to enter into so far-reaching an engagement at the present time. Mr. Clotton considered that, in present circumstances, it would be difficult for the United States to undertake any obligation more binding than the form of 'consultation' provided for in Article 22 of the Treaty for the Limitation of Naval Armament. Considerable difficulty was experienced in arriving at any agreed formula, and finally it was decided to leave it for each Government to consider whether any advance in the direction indicated could usefully be made at the present time and, if so, in what direction that advance should be. . . .<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Section V of this memorandum dealt with the question of co-operation for the prevention of liquor smuggling. Mr. MacDonald concluded the memorandum with some general observations on the importance of Anglo-American co-operation.

## APPENDIX A. TO No. 77

### No. 1

*Sir E. Howard to Mr. A. Henderson (Received October 7, 9.30 a.m.)*

*Nos. 493 and 494 Telegraphic [A 6634/3895/45]*

WASHINGTON, October 6, 1929<sup>1</sup>

Following from the Prime Minister:

'It is proposed to issue from the White House on Wednesday evening,<sup>2</sup> for publication on Thursday morning, a statement outlining range of subjects touched upon during prolonged interchange of views which has taken place at the President's camp to-day. Amongst points to be mentioned in the statement are the following:

*'Naval Stations.*

' "With a further view to reducing fear and the friction that comes from fear we have obtained opinion of our General Board of the Navy that the existing military and naval stations of Great Britain in the Western Hemisphere are not in a condition to be a menace to the United States. Great Britain will not hereafter establish any military or naval stations in her possessions in the Western Hemisphere, nor alter any such existing stations in such a way as in either case to become a menace to the United States.

<sup>1</sup> This telegram was dispatched at 12.49 a.m. on October 7.

<sup>2</sup> October 9.

“Reciprocally, United States makes the same agreement as to Eastern Hemisphere. It is understood, however, by both parties that the above declaration does not alter or supersede the provisions of article 19 of the Washington treaty of 1922 for the limitation of naval armament.

“Such Western Hemisphere is to be defined as that portion of the globe lying west of 30 meridian and east of the 170 meridian, and Eastern Hemisphere as remainder of the globe.”

*‘Rights and Immunities at Sea.*

“We recognise that some of the most troublesome questions in international relations are those arising out of rights and immunities at sea during war.

“Controversies and disputes engendered by this subject have in the past been pregnant with the danger of aggravating or extending hostilities. Misunderstandings and fears arising from this source have been [a] frequent but, we believe, an avoidable cause of friction between our two countries. We have resolved, therefore, that we will examine this question fully and frankly.

“The President hopes that food-ships will be declared free from interference in time of war, thus removing starvation of women and children from the weapons of warfare and reducing the necessity for naval arms for the protection of avenues of food supplies. Such a proposal would protect all vessels laden solely with food supplies in the same fashion as hospital ships are now protected.”

‘I should be grateful for any observations you wish to offer on the above by Tuesday morning. A similar request has been addressed to Canadian Government.

‘Please inform other Dominion Governments.

‘I will send further explanatory telegram to-morrow.’

(Repeated to Ottawa.)

No. 2

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir E. Howard (Washington)*

*No. 503 State Telegraphic [A 6634/3895/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 7, 1929, 6.35 p.m.*

Following for Prime Minister:

‘Your telegrams Nos. 493 and 494 of October 6: Naval disarmament.

‘In view of the difficult nature of the subject and of our desire to be guided by the promised explanatory telegram, which has not yet been received at 6.5 p.m., it has not yet been possible to complete necessary consultation with other interested departments. We hope, however, to despatch reply to-morrow morning.’

*Sir E. Howard to Mr. A. Henderson (Received October 8, 8.45 a.m.)*

*No. 495 State Telegraphic [A 6661/3895/45]*

WASHINGTON, October 7, 1929  
(October 7, 1.35 p.m.)

My telegrams Nos. 493 and 494.

Following from Sir R. Vansittart:

'President is most anxious to make declarations in this sense in view of propaganda against a naval settlement which is expected to be based largely on naval base and freedom of the seas issues. The wording of the declarations is, of course, more suitable for a public statement to the press than for a formal agreement, but we hope that no change in the wording will be made except where it is considered essential. We objected to the words "starvation of women and children", but realised that it would be well not to persist too far at that stage. My impression is that if objection were raised at your end some modification might be secured.

'It will be realised that once the question of freedom of the seas (the expression originally used which we eliminated) had been raised, conversations between ourselves only was the best we could hope to secure, and was, indeed, the objective outlined in Belligerent Rights Committee's report.

'With regard to third paragraph, we believe that if idea of an understanding in regard to food-ships were to prove acceptable it may be possible to rest content with this and so prevent any further incursion into this dangerous field. It was clearly stated by both President and the Secretary of State that passage beginning "and reducing the necessity" was not intended to be used and would not be used by them as a plea for reduction of cruiser strength.

'We much hope there will be no difficulty about naval stations, as declaration, while not altering *status quo*, will be most valuable here. We hope to issue at the same time a very satisfactory statement as to general course of conversations on the naval question.'

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir E. Howard (Washington)*

*No. 504 Telegraphic [A 6661/3895/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, October 8, 1929

Your telegrams Nos. 493, 494 and 495.

My two immediately following telegrams contain considered views of Chiefs of Staffs and of Foreign Office upon the points raised in your telegrams under reference.

Also see my telegram No. 507.

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir E. Howard (Washington)*

*No. 505 State Telegraphic [A 6661/3895/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 8, 1929, 2.50 p.m.*

My immediately preceding telegram.

The Chiefs of Staff met this morning to consider your telegrams Nos. 493 and 494.

They agree with the General Navy Board of the United States that existing military and naval stations of Great Britain in the Western Hemisphere are not in a condition to be a menace to the United States, and this view is one that has often been expressed by them.

As regards the future of such naval stations in the Western Hemisphere, they advise most strongly against any mention being included in the proposed statement that could be construed as implying our readiness to enter into an agreement which would potentially restrict our freedom of action in our own possessions whilst imposing no parallel obligation on the United States, for the reason that that country has no such possessions in the Eastern Hemisphere except the Philippines covered by the Washington Treaty.

It must be realised that our garrisons in Bermuda and the West Indies have been (for financial reasons) deliberately allowed to fall below a figure which would even admit of their manning the existing armament. Any undertaking which might preclude our bringing these garrisons up to their proper strengths again, if and when we desire to do so, would be a dangerous precedent. Our establishments in Bermuda and the West Indies are maintained quite irrespective of the United States in connexion with the general arrangements for trade protection. It is essential that, if the world situation changes, we should be free to re-establish the garrisons which are reduced to a nucleus and to bring the defences up to date. The proposed statement as worded does not cover Canadian naval establishments in Canada, but similar arguments would, in the opinion of the Chiefs of Staff, be applicable to them.

As regards rights and immunities at sea, the Chiefs of Staff are of opinion that on a question of such vital importance to the Empire nothing whatever should appear in the statement to be issued which could be taken at this stage as being even the most partial surrender of our belligerent rights at sea.

They invite attention to the reports of the recent enquiry by the Committee of Imperial Defence, of which Mr. Jones<sup>1</sup> has copies. After exhaustive enquiry the main conclusions reached were that belligerent rights should be maintained as high as possible and that international discussion of the question should be avoided if possible.

The Chiefs of Staff are seriously concerned at the prospect of any statement being made which might commit His Majesty's Government prematurely to a course of action in a grave matter of Imperial defence, and urge that you

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Thomas Jones, Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet.

yourself should reserve judgment until this most complicated and controversial subject has been re-examined by your Government, and the Dominions consulted.

In any event, they beg that you will secure the omission from the statement of the passage suggesting exemption of food-stuffs from blockade. They would remind you that food-stuffs can be converted into munitions of war.

No. 6

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir E. Howard (Washington)*

*No. 506 State Telegraphic [A 6661/3895/15]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 8, 1929, 4 p.m.*

My telegram No. 504 of October 8: Naval disarmament.

If it is necessary from President's point of view that some reference to belligerent rights should be made, Foreign Office would regard two paragraphs beginning 'we recognise' and ending 'fully and frankly' as comparatively harmless, provided that first paragraph, like second, could be made to refer to the past and that some reference should be made to the new situation created by the Peace Pact. Please see in this connexion paragraph 64 of C.I.D. Paper 944-B, of which Craigie has copy.

The President's proposal about food-ships, however, seems to involve considerable difficulty for members of the League of Nations. The proposal that a State which had gone to war in violation of the Covenant and the Pact of Peace should be entitled to import food-stuffs without interference from members of the League who were acting against such State in accordance with the Covenant seems impossible to reconcile with the text of article 16, which binds the members, *inter alia*, to prohibit all commercial intercourse between nationals of the Covenant-breaking State and the nationals of any other State, whether a member of the League or not. This obligation is not affected by the unratified amendment drawn up by the second, fifth and sixth Assemblies. Moreover, the resolutions adopted by the 1921 Assembly, while recognising that the cutting off of the food supplies of the civil population of the defaulting State should be regarded as an extremely drastic measure, nevertheless contemplated the possibility of its application if the other measures available were clearly inadequate, and also contemplated in special circumstances the establishment of an effective blockade of the sea-board of the Covenant-breaking State, an operation which would obviously entail the stoppage of food cargoes bound for that sea-board. In view of this action by the Assembly reference to starvation of women and children seems particularly undesirable.

Further, it would seem almost inevitable that if a Covenant-breaking State were to be assured of the power to import food from a non-League State it would be impossible to maintain the prohibition on League States to supply food to it themselves. It would be difficult for the Council of the League to recommend that the members of the League should cut off supplies

to the Covenant-breaking State from their own countries if that State were receiving supplies from non-League States without interference.

It appears, therefore, that the adoption of the President's proposal would have a very important effect upon the position of article 16, and it would seem difficult for us, as a member of the League, to commit ourselves to any such proposal in conversations with a non-League State without the question having been the subject of discussion between the members of the League at Geneva. The discussions of article 16 which have taken place at several Assemblies without any amendments to the article having been definitely adopted show how difficult and important the question is.

We would further suggest that reference to two hemispheres is susceptible of misinterpretation by other Powers as an attempt on the part of Anglo-Saxon nations to divide the world between them. This applies particularly to France, which has possessions in both hemispheres. Furthermore, Italian press comment on Prime Minister's visit is already extremely bitter.

No. 7

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir E. Howard (Washington)*

*No. 507 State Telegraphic [A 6661/3895/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 8, 1929, 3.30 p.m.*

Following for Sir R. Vansittart from Sir V. Wellesley:

'My telegram No. 505 of October 8: Naval disarmament.

'Proposed statement and wording does not cover Canada, but if it is intended to cover Canadian naval establishments you are no doubt in direct touch with Canadian Government.

'We have communicated the Prime Minister's message to Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Irish Free State, saying that if they have any observations they should telegraph them direct to him in Washington.'

No. 8

*Sir E. Howard to Mr. A. Henderson (Received October 9, 2.40 p.m.)*

*No. 499 State Telegraphic [A 6718/3895/45]*

WASHINGTON, *October 8, 1929<sup>1</sup>*

Following from Sir R. Vansittart for Sir V. Wellesley:

'Your telegrams Nos. 503, 504, 505 and 506 have been helpful, and President has now been persuaded to withdraw personal declaration which he wished to make. But the vigour of your response to suggestion at the end of paragraph 1 of my telegram No. 495 has been such as to lead me to think there must be some misunderstanding, and that you supposed Prime Minister endorsed or agreed with declaration. This, of course, is not and has never been so. (He fully appreciated and made use of arguments in your telegram No. 506 respecting League of Nations; but as he was not committed by nor

<sup>1</sup> This telegram was dispatched at 3.55 a.m. on October 9.

endorsing President's "hope" he could not do more than point out the difficulty.) He is sending a separate telegram to Mr. Snowden, but I should perhaps send this further telegram to amplify explanation of the situation. It is this. President has withdrawn *now* and reluctantly personal statement which we have, of course, no power to prevent eventually; and it is highly probable that he *will* make it eventually, by speech or otherwise, at no very distant date. (It is evidently much in his mind; firstly, I think it dates back to his personal experiences and activities during the war, and, secondly, from his point of view, it is a necessity *vis-à-vis* Borah, to whom I will refer later.) But it is also in his mind to stop at his food-ships proposal and to go no farther on this subject. The situation and prospect have therefore to be faced. It has, indeed, long been expected with apprehension.

'With the elimination of his personal statement there remain first two paragraphs on this subject, beginning "We recognise" and ending "frankly", of which amended text follows in separate telegram.

'If this is not included, whole naval agreement, of which prospects are now most satisfactory, will probably fail in the Senate owing to an anti-Administration campaign led by Borah, who is, as you are aware, out to make so-called freedom of the seas precede naval agreement. (President does not wish to go into even his attenuated version till after the Five-Power Conference.) If this happens we may well within now measurable time find ourselves faced, after a short interval of calumny and bad relations, with a demand for a wide international conference on wider issues than those now suggested. Prime Minister was, indeed, confronted with proposal for *international* conference, and it was only by great exertion that he narrowed proposed examination down to United States and Great Britain, thereby fulfilling paragraph 70 (k) of conclusions of Belligerent Rights Committee's second report. Therefore, paragraph separately telegraphed and amended to meet Foreign Office telegram No. 506 is probably a minimum for passage of naval agreement. Elimination of this mild residue may well involve failure of the whole policy. It looks like a case of sibylline books. I am sure Prime Minister would wish you to show this to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Acting Prime Minister<sup>1</sup>.'

<sup>1</sup> Mr. P. Snowden.

## No. 9

*Sir E. Howard to Mr. A. Henderson (Received October 9, 11.15 a.m.)*

*Nos. 500 and 501 State Telegraphic [A 6700/3895/45]*

WASHINGTON, October 9, 1929  
(October 9, 3.33 a.m.)

My immediately preceding telegram.  
Following from Sir R. Vansittart:

*'Rights and Immunities at Sea.*

'Wording of paragraph now proposed (which takes account of suggestions contained in your telegram No. 504) is as follows:

“As regards the second point, we recognise that some of the most troublesome questions in our relations have been those which have arisen out of rights and immunities at sea during war. The controversies and disputes engendered by this have in the past been pregnant with the danger of aggravating and extending hostilities. Misunderstandings and fears springing from this source have been a frequent, but we believe avoidable, cause of friction between our two countries. We have resolved, therefore, in the light of the new situation created by the conclusion of Pact of Peace, that we shall examine the question fully and frankly together in all its bearings.”

‘In order to meet objections outlined in your telegram No. 505, we propose following wording to be substituted for previous wording:

“The General Board of the United States Navy have put their opinion on record that the existing military and naval stations of Great Britain in the Western Hemisphere are not in a condition to be an appreciable menace to the United States.

“Great Britain neither intends nor desires to modify this situation in such a way as to cause these stations to become such a menace. Any technical elaboration of this assurance which may be required will form the subject of subsequent examination.”

‘United States Government having spontaneously raised this point and extorted the grudging recognition contained in paragraph 1 from United States Navy Board, refusal on our part to confirm an obvious and existing fact (*i.e.*, that our stations are not intended to be a menace to the United States) would cause the worst impression here.

‘You will appreciate great value to us of the admission made by Navy Board in paragraph 1. This agitation about the naval bases has proceeded for years and now arouses more widespread interest than ever. It will undoubtedly be utilised by those wishing to make any naval agreement impossible, and, once raised (if left unsettled), must necessarily tend to stiffen the official American attitude on naval and other questions.

‘As regards Canada, please see telegram 217.<sup>1</sup> It is proposed to make no mention of Canada in the declaration, but Prime Minister will discuss matter with Prime Minister of Canada when he reaches Ottawa.’

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. This telegram gave the views of the Prime Minister of Canada on telegrams Nos. 493-4.

No. 10

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir E. Howard (Washington)*

*No. 514 State Telegraphic [A 6705/3895/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 9, 1929, 12.20 p.m.*

Following from Chancellor of Exchequer<sup>1</sup> for Prime Minister:

‘I have just received following message from Mr. Henderson:

“Mr. Henderson has read the whole of the telegrams, and associates himself with the views expressed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer as set forth in his last telegram.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. P. Snowden.



“Mr. Henderson understood that the question of the freedom of the seas was not to be part of the conversations for an agreement on naval disarmament, but had to be deferred until a later stage.

“Mr. Henderson agrees that in the circumstances no further indications could have been given to the Prime Minister than those contained in the telegrams which have been despatched, but suggests that perhaps it might be expedient to tell the Prime Minister of the sympathy felt for him in the difficulty in which he has been placed by the fact of this awkward question having been raised at this moment.”

‘I associate myself warmly in expressing sympathy.’

No. 11

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir E. Howard (Washington)*

*No. 515 State Telegraphic [A 6703/3895/15]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 9, 1929, 5.15 p.m.*

Following for Prime Minister from Chancellor of the Exchequer:

‘Your telegram No. 498.’

‘No one here supposed that you were endorsing the President’s immunity proposal, but we felt it would be fatal for one of the parties to the proposed examination to commit himself in advance to a proposition which challenges our historic attitude towards the question of rights and immunities at sea. The appearance of such a statement in what is practically a joint public announcement of what occurred at your conversations might well be interpreted to signify your tacit acquiescence in the proposal. In any event, the statement would load the dice against us at the later discussions, and would be calculated to arouse suspicion and anxiety in the public mind here, which might well prejudice the discussions even on disarmament. I gather, however, from telegram No. 500 that the President’s proposal will be dropped from the statement, and we are greatly relieved.

‘I should have preferred to avoid any international discussion of this question, as recommended by the Belligerent Rights Committee. I cannot see how our policy of the renunciation of war is to benefit from a possibly acrimonious discussion of one of war’s remoter and more controversial problems. If, however, we cannot escape from the raising of this question, in spite of the risk of friction and ill-feeling involved, I agree that the plan you have adopted is the one open to the least objection. I hope, however, that the discussions may be deferred at least until after the completion of the Disarmament Conference.’

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. In this telegram (received at 10.40 a.m. on October 9) Mr. MacDonald sent a personal message to Mr. Snowden that he was not thinking of endorsing the President’s proposal, but of agreeing to an examination of the question of belligerent rights. Mr. MacDonald considered that, if this latter proposal were not accepted, the question would be referred to an ‘International Tribunal’, and the Senate would refuse to pass a naval agreement.

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*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir E. Howard (Washington)*  
*No. 516 State Telegraphic [A 6700/3895/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 9, 1929, 5.30 p.m.*

Your telegrams Nos. 500 and 501 of October 9: Naval disarmament.

Committee of Chiefs of Staff suggest that, if the paragraph in the proposed statement beginning 'Great Britain neither intends nor desires' is to be published, it should be made clear to the United States Government and placed on record that we interpret this to mean that, while we have no intention of doing anything that is a menace to the United States of America, we shall not be debarred from taking any action necessary for using these bases effectively in the near or distant future should this be required owing to our relations with some Power other than the United States of America.

Mr. Snowden agrees.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This concluding sentence was accidentally omitted from telegram No. 516, and subsequently telegraphed on October 10.

**No. 78**

*Mr. Atherton to Mr. A. Henderson (Received October 11)*<sup>1</sup>  
*[A 6790/30/45]*

Sir,

LONDON, *October 10, 1929*

I have the honour to refer to the note which you were good enough to address to the Ambassador on the 7th October,<sup>2</sup> and I take great pleasure in informing you that the American Government hastens to accept the invitation of His Majesty's Government to a conference on naval armaments to take place in London the latter part of January, which will unite the Powers signatory to the Washington Treaty in a discussion which will anticipate the problems raised under article 21 of that treaty as well as broaden its whole scope by the inclusion of the other categories of ships.

I have, &c.

RAY ATHERTON

*Chargé d'Affaires, ad interim*

<sup>1</sup> This note was published in the press on October 11, 1929.

<sup>2</sup> No. 76.

**No. 79**

*Lord Tyrrell (Paris) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received October 15)*  
*No. 1416 [A 6887/30/45]*

Sir,

PARIS, *October 14, 1929*

Mr. Neville Henderson's despatches Nos. 1298 and 1308 of the 19th and 21st September<sup>1</sup> respectively, as well as the recent Paris press summaries, will have shown the close attention with which the Prime Minister's

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

conversations with the United States Ambassador in London and the preparations for Mr. MacDonald's visit to America were followed here. This anxiety is due to the impression largely due to American public statements on the subject that we are trying to negotiate with America some alliance or understanding which would not only make us independent of Europe, but which would also enable us, with American help, to force upon Europe an Anglo-American naval agreement.

2. The joint declaration issued in Washington on the 9th October seems, in better-informed quarters in France, to have weakened the belief that we are attempting an American alliance. There is now a certain realisation that what His Majesty's Government are working for is no more than co-operation with America in questions affecting the interests of the two countries. Reasonable opinion understands that French interests are not thereby necessarily jeopardised.

3. The belief that we are trying to force on Europe an Anglo-American naval agreement seems also to have been diminished by the publication of the terms of the invitation to the Five-Power Naval Conference. There is now a fairly widespread understanding that, so far as naval matters are concerned, what the conversations and Mr. MacDonald's visit have really secured is the acceptance by the British and American Governments, in principle, of parity between the two fleets. It was always realised here that some such Anglo-American agreement was the essential preliminary condition to any further progress in naval as well as general disarmament.

4. In these circumstances there is little disposition to argue that the French Government should abstain from attending the Five-Power Conference. On the other hand, it seems probable that the French Government will insist on this conference—in the words of the invitation of the 7th October—limiting its task to preparing 'a text which will facilitate the work of the Preparatory Commission and of the subsequent General Disarmament Conference'. As a recent leading article in the 'Temps' stated, 'it will have to be made clear that the conference can only discuss the best method of limitation of naval forces, the interdependence of land, naval and aerial armaments as admitted by the Preparatory Commission, continuing to be borne in mind, as well as the fact that the General Disarmament Conference alone is able by the conclusion of an unanimous agreement to lay down the figures of global tonnage and of tonnage by categories'.

5. The decision to make it clear that the Five-Power Conference will not infringe on the province of the General Disarmament Conference was certainly essential so far as French opinion is concerned. Any attempt to force the pace at the Five-Power Conference and to lay down there final arrangements for naval disarmament could, I am sure, only lead to failure. I do not know if it is intended to discuss the question of the freedom of the seas at the Five-Power Conference, but at that conference the French may possibly argue that a final decision on naval strengths is impossible until they know where they stand on this question. Again, any attempt to hurry matters at the Five-Power Conference might solidify the French and Italian opposi-

tion. On the other hand, procedure by stages might, if the Italians continue to insist on complete parity with the French, eventually make it possible to isolate the former and put them in the position of being the only obstacle to a settlement. Lastly, no final settlement of naval disarmament seems likely at the Five-Power Conference in view of the almost insurmountable difficulties which the French are likely to make about discussing at a conference where naval matters alone are at issue the abolition of the submarine. The reasons for which the French insist on its maintenance are too well known to require repetition here, and we all know their argument that for their defensive purposes it is the most suitable class of vessel. On the other hand, we must not forget that insistence on the maintenance of the submarine is for France a bargaining counter of a certain value, and that in a *General Disarmament Conference*, covering land and aerial, as well as naval, disarmament, it might conceivably be possible, by concessions in other spheres, to negotiate its abolition.

6. I venture, therefore, to express the hope that in the preparations for the forthcoming Five-Power Conference and in the conference itself we shall, if we adhere to our attitude respecting the desirability of the total abolition of the submarine, bear in mind the price which we shall undoubtedly have to pay the French for this. Their consent to abolition may have to be bought in some other field of disarmament (the question of trained reserves) or conceivably in that of security, which, in French minds, and as M. Briand indicated at Geneva on the 5th September, would be inestimably increased by the bestowal on the League of Nations of the right and duty of punishing the aggressor. I cannot, in any case, believe that we have the faintest chance of securing abolition by running our heads against the brick wall of French resistance at the Five-Power Conference.

7. In conclusion, I have no hesitation in reporting that, so far as France is concerned, the prospects of the international situation have been improved by the results of Mr. MacDonald's American visit. I venture to express the earnest hope that now that this improvement has been secured, the utmost care will be taken to see that all the members of His Majesty's Government speak on these questions with one voice, and that no word will be uttered which will reawaken the suspicions which are so easily aroused here and which are, even now, only partially laid. It would be idle to pretend that the change of Government in Great Britain did not cause anxiety here. His Majesty's Government's desire for friendly co-operation and settlement with America was at first supposed to be one of the indications of our intention to abandon the attempt to maintain co-operation with France. Continuance on the lines laid down by you, Sir, at The Hague and subsequently by the Prime Minister at Geneva and Washington will, I believe, end in convincing public opinion here that British co-operation with no (*sic*) country is not inconsistent with the closest co-operation with France, and that the policy of the present Government in Great Britain is the policy of all true lovers of peace.

I have, &c.

TYRRELL

*Signor Bordonaro*<sup>1</sup> to *Mr. A. Henderson* (Received October 16)<sup>2</sup>

[A 6889, 30/15]

(Translation.)

Sir,

ITALIAN EMBASSY, LONDON, October 15, 1929

With reference to my note of the 7th instant regarding the invitation addressed by the British Government to the Italian Government to take part in a conference for the reduction of naval armaments, I have the honour, in conformity with instructions from my Government, to bring the following to the knowledge of your Excellency:

The Italian Government have given the most serious consideration to the note of the 7th instant, in which the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, after bringing to the knowledge of the Italian Government the various points on which a provisional and informal agreement had been reached between the British Government and the Government of the United States in the course of their conversations on the subject of naval disarmament, proposed to the Italian Government to participate in a conference to be held in London at the commencement of the third week of January next year for the purpose of examining the categories of vessels not contemplated by the Treaty of Washington of 1922, and of dealing with the questions mentioned in the second paragraph of article 21 of the same treaty. This conference, to which the Powers who signed the Treaty of Washington are being invited, is to aim at drawing up a text which would facilitate the task of the Preparatory Commission of the League of Nations and, later, of the General Disarmament Conference.

The attitude of the Italian Government on the problem of general disarmament, and naval disarmament in particular, is too well known to the British Government to require statement. It has been clearly expressed on repeated occasions, and, lastly, in the note addressed on the 6th October, 1928,<sup>3</sup> to the British Embassy in Rome, in reply to the communication on the subject of the draft Franco-British naval agreement of last year.

Being desirous, as always, of collaborating in any step proposed with the view to eliminate the disadvantages and dangers of excessive armaments, and cherishing the hope that the British initiative may result in real progress towards the solution of the general disarmament problem, the Italian Government gladly accept the invitation of the British Government to participate in the London Conference. They note that the British Government intend to communicate to them their views regarding the matters to be discussed at the conference, and, while awaiting such communications, they will, for their part, acquaint the British Government with their own views on the subject.

I have, &c.

A. C. BORDONARO

<sup>1</sup> Italian Ambassador in London.    <sup>2</sup> This note was published in the press on October 17.

<sup>3</sup> This note was published in Cmd. 3211. In the note the Italian Government emphasized, *inter alia*, their preference for limitation by global tonnage rather than by categories.

*Mr. Matsudaira to Mr. A. Henderson (Received October 16)*<sup>1</sup>

[A 6923/30/45]

Sir,

JAPANESE EMBASSY, LONDON, *October 16, 1929*

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your note, dated the 7th October, informing me of a provisional and informal agreement reached between the Prime Minister and the American Ambassador at London on the subject of naval disarmament, and inviting the Japanese Government to participate in a conference which it is proposed to summon in London, to consider the categories of ships not covered by the Washington Treaty, and to arrange for and deal with the questions covered by the second paragraph of article 21 of that treaty.

2. Having laid before my Government the contents of your note under acknowledgment, I am desired to state in reply that the Japanese Government are happy to signify their entire concurrence in the desirability of the proposed conference, and are ready to appoint representatives to take part in that conference. The date suggested for the opening of the conference, namely, the beginning of the third week of January 1930, is also agreeable to my Government.

3. The Japanese Government are further gratified to know of the willingness of the British Government to continue informal conversations with me, as hitherto, on many points which may require elucidation. They note that similar discussions conducted in London by the Prime Minister with the American Ambassador during the last three months had cleared the ground for an agreement on essential points between the British and American Governments, prior to the invitation extended to other naval Powers to meet in a conference. My Government attach the highest importance to the same procedure being followed by the Japanese and British Governments, in order to ensure agreement between them on various questions that are to be laid before the conference. The success of the forthcoming conference no doubt depends in a large measure upon the satisfactory issue of such preliminary discussions, and my Government confidently trust that the informal conversations between the British Government and myself on questions of special moment will be carried on and completed before these questions are presented to the conference for final adjustment.

4. In your note under review, it is intimated that the British Government propose to communicate to me in due course their views as to the subjects for discussions at the conference. The Japanese Government are looking forward to such a communication with keen interest, and, on their part,

<sup>1</sup> This note was published in the press on October 19. In leaving the note at the Foreign Office, Mr. Matsudaira said that he was instructed to state at once that the Japanese Government would claim a ratio of 70 per cent. of all auxiliary craft but that as regards battleships the ratio 5:5:3 laid down at the Washington Conference would remain unaffected.

they will be glad to furnish the British Government with a corresponding communication as desired.

5. With regard to the four points of principle mentioned in your note as the subject of provisional agreement between the British and American Governments, the Japanese Government hope to be able to submit their observations in the course of the informal conversation which I shall shortly permit myself to hold with the British Government. They would, however, make use of this occasion to assure you of their cordial support to the principle that the Treaty for the Renunciation of War, signed at Paris in 1928, should be taken as the starting-point for all discussions on disarmament. They feel confident that the sense of national security inspired by the provisions of that treaty in the mutual relations of the contracting Powers will pave the way for the final settlement of the outstanding questions relative to naval disarmament.

6. In conclusion, I am instructed to express the sincere and earnest hope of the Japanese Government that the conference will succeed in the adoption of plans calculated to promote international peace and goodwill, and to relieve humanity of the heavy burden of armament, whether existing or contemplated. It is not merely the limitation, but also the reduction of armament, that all nations should seek to attain.

I have, &c.

T. MATSUDAIRA

No. 82

*M. de Fleuriau to Mr. A. Henderson (Received October 17)*

[A 6924/30/45]

M. le Secrétaire d'État,

AMBASSADE DE FRANCE, LONDRES, *le 16 octobre 1929*

A la date du 7 octobre 1929, votre Excellence a bien voulu m'adresser une lettre, par laquelle elle me demandait de faire parvenir au Gouvernement français l'invitation du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté britannique à participer à une conférence sur le désarmement naval, qui se tiendrait à Londres en janvier prochain.

J'ai l'honneur de transmettre ci-jointe à votre Excellence une note exprimant la réponse affirmative de mon Gouvernement.<sup>1</sup>

Veuillez agréer, &c.

A. DE FLEURIAU

ENCLOSURE IN No. 82

*Note*

Le Gouvernement français a pris connaissance avec un vif intérêt de la lettre du Secrétaire d'État pour les Affaires étrangères, par laquelle le

<sup>1</sup> In transmitting this note, M. de Fleuriau asked whether it would be possible to communicate to the French Government the correspondence between the Prime Minister and the American Ambassador previous to the issue of invitations to the conference.

Gouvernement britannique, en lui communiquant les principes qui ont fait l'objet d'un accord provisoire entre lui et le Gouvernement des États-Unis d'Amérique, l'invite à se faire représenter à une conférence qui s'ouvrirait à Londres au début de la troisième semaine du mois de janvier prochain et où seraient discutés les problèmes relatifs aux catégories de bâtiments de guerre qui ne sont pas visés dans le Traité de Washington de 1922, ainsi que les questions faisant l'objet du deuxième paragraphe de l'article 21 de ce traité.

Le Gouvernement de la République se félicite que les conversations engagées entre le Premier Ministre britannique et l'Ambassadeur des États-Unis à Londres suivant la méthode suggérée au cours des délibérations de la Commission préparatoire du Désarmement, aient pris un tour aussi favorable. Il n'a pas été moins heureux de constater que les deux Gouvernements ont trouvé dans le Pacte de Paris du 27 août 1928 un élément précieux pour réaliser entre eux une entente de principe sur les armements navals leur paraissant répondre aux besoins de leur sécurité. Le Gouvernement britannique, après s'être concerté avec le Gouvernement des États-Unis, propose maintenant d'étendre ces conversations aux Puissances principalement intéressées à la solution du problème naval, et cette initiative a expressément pour but, ainsi que le marque la communication du Secrétaire d'État britannique, de faciliter la tâche de la Commission préparatoire et celle de la future conférence générale pour la limitation et la réduction des armements.

Le Gouvernement de la République française a donné trop de preuves de son désir de l'achèvement rapide des travaux préparatoires de cette conférence, dont la réunion permettra de réaliser les obligations inscrites à l'article 8 du Pacte de la Société des Nations, pour ne pas se féliciter de cette proposition. Il est donc heureux d'accepter l'invitation qui lui est adressée.

Les principes qui n'ont pas cessé de guider la politique française, soit en ce qui concerne les conditions générales du problème de la limitation des armements, soit au sujet des conditions spéciales du problème de la limitation des armements navals, ont été trop souvent définis, aussi bien au cours des travaux de Genève que dans les négociations connexes, pour qu'il soit nécessaire de les rappeler.

D'ailleurs, le Secrétaire d'État britannique pour les Affaires étrangères, dans sa lettre précitée, fait connaître les intentions de son Gouvernement de procéder avec le Gouvernement français, comme avec les autres Gouvernements invités à la Conférence de Londres, à des échanges de vues préliminaires sur les questions qui seront inscrites au programme de leurs délibérations communes. Le Gouvernement de la République ne voit que des avantages à l'application de cette méthode, qui lui fournira l'occasion de préciser sa manière de voir, tant en ce qui concerne les divers points visés dans la lettre de son Excellence Mr. Henderson, que touchant les problèmes qui s'y rattachent et l'ensemble des questions qui pourront se poser devant la prochaine conférence.



No. 83

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received October 31)*

*No. 129 Telegraphic [A 7270/30/45]*

ROME, October 30, 1929

My telegram No. 124.<sup>1</sup>

Minister for Foreign Affairs<sup>2</sup> today gave me asking that I should treat it as highly confidential, following interesting information regarding Italian attitude on submarine questions.

Minister for Foreign Affairs said that last words of French Ambassador to Mussolini before leaving for Paris a fortnight ago were 'then we can absolutely count on Italian support in submarine question?' to which Mussolini had replied 'Yes, certainly'. Since then however whole question had been under examination by political and naval authorities. He, Minister for Foreign Affairs, had pointed out that only Power against whom submarines would be useful to Italy was Great Britain and a war between Great Britain and Italy was unthinkable. In so far as France and still more the small naval Powers such as Yugoslavia and Greece were concerned complete abolition of submarines would be most advantageous to Italian interests. Finally after a considerable struggle he had persuaded Signor Mussolini and after a still greater struggle the naval authorities to share this point of view. He could practically assure me that the Italians would come to the conference in January prepared to advocate the abolition of submarines. He had already informed the French Ambassador that the French could not count on Italian support in the question. This complete *rolle-face* in the Italian attitude as previously indicated to me by Signor Mussolini and Minister for Foreign Affairs and as voiced in the whole of the Italian press is somewhat surprising but none the less satisfactory on that account.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. In this telegram Sir R. Graham reported that the Minister of Foreign Affairs was disappointed with the French reply that they would examine carefully any proposals put forward by the Italian Government. The Italian Government did not wish to put forward written proposals but rather to initiate friendly conversations.

<sup>2</sup> Signor Grandi.

No. 84

*Mr. R. I. Campbell (Washington)<sup>1</sup> to Mr. A. Henderson*  
*(Received November 8)*

*No. 535 Telegraphic [A 7442/30/45]*

WASHINGTON, November 7, 1929

When I saw Secretary of State this morning he told me that request of Japanese Government relative to increased cruiser ratio was embarrassing

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Campbell was in charge of H.M. Embassy from October 13 to December 5, 1929, in the absence of Sir E. Howard.

to him firstly because he did not like the understanding with Prime Minister as far as it went being as it were attacked in detail while it was necessary for him not to give the impression that understanding was in the nature of rigid agreement for fear of Japanese feeling that His Majesty's Government and United States Government were confronting them with a [*? fait accompli*].<sup>1</sup> Secondly, because he saw how Japanese wish to have an increased cruiser ratio on larger (i.e. United States) figure for 10,000-ton cruisers complicated the situation for His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom *vis-à-vis* His Majesty's Government in Australia. Thirdly, because at the same time he did not wish in any way to offend Japanese Government whom he considered to be [*? genuinely*]<sup>1</sup> and sincerely anxious for limitation and reduction of naval forces.

He wondered what His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom were saying to Japanese Government on the subject of these requests and I think some indication of the line we are taking would be helpful to him.

Secretary of State expressed pleasure over proceedings in House of Commons on November 5 relative to Prime Minister's visit.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The text here is uncertain.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. MacDonald made a statement in the House of Commons on this day with regard to his visit. *Parl. Deb.* 5th Ser., vol. ccxxxi, cols. 885-94.

## No. 85

*Mr. A. Henderson to H.M. Representatives at Washington, Paris, Rome,  
and Tokyo*

*Telegraphic*<sup>1</sup> [A 7484/30/45]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 9, 1929*

Please inform Government to which you are accredited that it is suggested that the London Naval Conference should hold its first session on the morning of Tuesday, January 21st next. I shall be glad to know at earliest possible moment whether this date is agreeable to Government to which you are accredited. If so, particulars in regard to the time and place of the meeting will be sent later.

His Majesty's Government consider it most desirable that no technical experts should be nominated as delegates by any of the participating Governments, though experts would of course be present in the Conference room in an advisory capacity. This would be in conformity with previous practice and you should express the hope that the Government to which you are accredited will agree that this practice should be followed on the present occasion.

I shall inform you as soon as a definite decision has been taken in regard to the constitution of the British delegation.

<sup>1</sup> No. 565 to Washington; No. 255 to Paris; No. 198 to Rome; No. 188 to Tokyo.

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received November 19)*  
*No. 757 [A 7749/30/45]*

Sir,

ROME, November 11, 1929

With reference to my telegram No. 129<sup>1</sup> of the 30th ultimo, I have the honour to report that, when I saw the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs this morning, I asked him whether he could give me any further information regarding the attitude of the Italian Government on the submarine question.

2. Signor Grandi replied that he must again ask me to treat what he said as highly confidential. He had, perhaps, been a little too sanguine in our previous conversation. The exact position was that, while he himself and Admiral Sirianni, the Minister of Marine, were strongly in favour of total abolition of submarines for the reasons which he had already given me, this view was not entirely shared by the Naval Staff, who were putting up opposition to it. Signor Mussolini also was somewhat doubtful on the subject, although his Excellency had not yet had time to study it in all its aspects. When he came to do so Signor Grandi hoped that, with Admiral Sirianni's support, he would be able to persuade him, and more than this he could not say for the time being.

3. You will observe that Signor Grandi appears to be hedging. This surprises me less than did his Excellency's original statement, which I reported to you in the exact terms in which he volunteered it to me. My own impression is that the Italian attitude on the submarine question will depend a good deal on whether the French Government are or are not accommodating to Italy on the question of parity, and will vary accordingly. My Roumanian colleague, who has close connexions in the French capital, tells me in confidence that he saw Admiral Lacaze during a comparatively recent visit to Paris, and that the admiral informed him that the French naval authorities were not opposed to accepting the idea of a parity which they felt would be only nominal. On the other hand, the politicians were all strongly against it.

4. The United States Embassy has called my attention to the following paragraph, which has appeared in the 'Chicago Daily Tribune' of the 9th November:

'LONDON, November 8

'News reached London to-day that Italy has decided to take sides with America and Great Britain at the Five-Power Naval Conference, and will agree to the proposal of a total abolition of submarines. Premier Mussolini a few days ago sent for the British Ambassador to Rome, told him that he had carefully considered the question, gave him full details of the conversations between France and Italy, and said that he had decided to stand alongside the two great naval Powers.'

<sup>1</sup> No. 83.

As you are aware, I have never addressed Signor Mussolini on this subject, as my doing so at the present stage might do more harm than good; but I am a little concerned as to the effect which such a message may have upon his Excellency, who is inclined to react too strongly to press reports.

I have, &c.

R. GRAHAM

No. 87

*Mr. A. Henderson to Mr. R. I. Campbell (Washington)*

*No. 571 Telegraphic [A 7442/30/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 12, 1929*

Your telegram No. 535<sup>1</sup> (of November 7th: Japanese claim for increased cruiser ratio).

Taking the three points raised by the Secretary of State in turn, the answer is, we think, as follows:

(1) We see no objection to informing the Japanese Ambassador frankly of the understanding with the Prime Minister, namely, that in the interval before the conference meets both sides will study ways and means of bridging the gap of 30,000 tons which divides us, leaving the actual solution of this particular problem to the conference. It is the type of problem which, depending as it does to some extent for its solution on the attitude of other Powers, is best left for treatment when we meet round a table.

(2) The wish of the Japanese Government to have a certain increase in their 8-inch gun cruiser ratio is only embarrassing to His Majesty's Government in so far as the United States Government may find it necessary to embark on a heavy programme of 8-inch cruiser construction. A comparison of British and Japanese 8-inch tonnage, built and building, shows that Japan will have a ratio of nearly 74 per cent of British 8-inch cruiser tonnage. Clearly any increase in the present Japanese building programme, brought about by the size of the United States 8-inch cruiser programme, would impose upon us, however reluctantly, a revision of the British 8-inch cruiser strength. If a way can be found to enable the United States to reduce the number of their 8-inch cruisers to 18 this particular difficulty of the Japanese ratio will have been reduced to small proportions, for the Japanese, by building twelve ships, would almost have achieved their 70 per cent ratio on numbers if not on tonnage. A limitation of the United States 8-inch cruiser strength to eighteen is the more necessary in that any higher American figure would, I find, probably involve an agitation here for further 8-inch cruiser construction in order to achieve parity: the difficulty is thus not merely one arising out of the Japanese demand for a 70 per cent ratio as your telegram would seem to imply.

(3) We fully agree as to the sincere desire of the Japanese Government for reduction. They are clearly most anxious not to exceed their present

<sup>1</sup> No. 84.

building programme of twelve 8-inch cruisers and they would only do so if this necessity were to be imposed upon them by the size of the American building programme.

We think there should be no danger of offending the Japanese Government if the position is explained to them frankly as under (1) and (2) above, adding that both His Majesty's Government and the United States Government feel confident of finding the solution of the problem of 'parity' when the conference meets: the question of the size of the Japanese ratio is intimately associated with the bridging of the gap between the United States and ourselves and we feel that both questions could most appropriately be left for final decision when the conference assembles.

Please speak to Colonel Stimson in this sense as soon as possible and report whether he agrees.

Further since this was prepared. The Prime Minister finds that on even an agreement of 15 and 18 between us the Japanese will claim that they must add 20,000 tons to their strength of 12.

## No. 88

*Mr. R. I. Campbell (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson*  
(Received November 15)

*No. 545 Telegraphic [A 7661/30/45]*

WASHINGTON, November 14, 1929

Your telegram No. 571<sup>1</sup> only reached me yesterday evening and I could not therefore speak to Secretary of State who left Washington yesterday afternoon till November 18. I have secured an appointment with Under-Secretary of State tomorrow November 15 at 4 o'clock.

This afternoon head of Western European Division<sup>2</sup> who had asked me to see him on another subject volunteered that United States Government in a memorandum<sup>3</sup> contents of which he said had been telegraphed to United States Embassy on November 12 for communication to you had informed Japanese Government that they could not agree to latter's demand for ratio of 70 per cent of United States 8-inch gun cruiser strength and he was insistent that Japanese demand cannot be admitted. If United States Government maintain this position it would seemingly affect one of our arguments against their building twenty-one 8-inch gun vessels.

I should be glad of immediate instructions whether I should still speak in the sense of your telegram under reference or postpone interview with Under-Secretary of State pending revised instructions.

<sup>1</sup> No. 87.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. J. T. Marriner.

<sup>3</sup> This *aide-mémoire* was given by the Secretary of State to the Japanese Ambassador on November 12. A copy was sent to the United States Ambassador in London for the confidential information of the Prime Minister. The text of the *aide-mémoire* is printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1929*, vol. i, pp. 274-7.

*Mr. A. Henderson to Lord Tyrrell (Paris)*

*No. 2440 [A 7582/30/45]*

My Lord,

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 15, 1929*

With reference to previous correspondence regarding the forthcoming conference on naval disarmament, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that the French Ambassador lunched with the Prime Minister on the 11th November.

2. In reply to Mr. MacDonald's enquiry whether he had any views respecting conversations preliminary to the forthcoming conference, his Excellency said that M. Briand hoped that the question of the trading of neutrals with belligerents during war was not to be raised at the conference, and had asked him to remind the Prime Minister in this connexion of article 16 of the Covenant of the League of Nations. Mr. MacDonald assured the Ambassador that so far as His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom were concerned the subject would not be raised at the conference, and, further, that the President of the United States had been reminded of the obligations assumed by Great Britain under article 16, which His Majesty's Government could in no way violate.

3. M. de Fleuriau went on to say that he was proceeding to Paris on the 15th instant, and would seek further instructions. His Excellency was able to say at once, however, (1) that it would be impossible for France to agree to naval parity with Italy, and (2) that France was specially interested in submarines, partly because these vessels were a French invention, and partly for military reasons.

4. The Prime Minister informed his Excellency that it was the intention of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom to raise at the conference the question of the size and age of capital ships, as well as the calibre of their main armament. M. de Fleuriau replied that France had built none of these vessels, although she was entitled to construct one or two such units under the Washington Treaty of 1922. His Excellency could express no opinion about cruisers or destroyers, and in this connexion Mr. MacDonald remarked that a destroyer agreement would have to depend mainly upon an agreement regarding submarines.

5. The Ambassador enquired how it was proposed to constitute British representation at the conference. His Excellency was informed of what had been done, and it was promised that as soon as a final decision was reached he would be notified. Mr. MacDonald added that His Majesty's Government would be guided as to the numbers of their delegation by the numbers appointed by the Government of the United States.

I am, &c.

ARTHUR HENDERSON

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir R. Graham (Rome)**No. 1269 [A 7589.30/45]*

Sir,

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 15, 1929*

With reference to previous correspondence regarding the forthcoming Naval Conference, I have to inform you that the Prime Minister received the Italian Ambassador at 11 a.m. on the 12th November.

2. Mr. MacDonald opened the conversation by expressing his regret that the Italian Government had been so apprehensive of his visit to the United States, as shown by Italian press comment both before he left England and whilst he was in America. To this M. Bordonaro replied that the Prime Minister really was mistaken, and that press comment could not be taken for official comment. Mr. MacDonald answered that he had always understood that the Italian newspapers which he had in mind represented Government views, but that he had only wished to mention this to his Excellency in case the latter would like to remove the impressions which the Prime Minister had gathered.

3. Mr. MacDonald then went on to explain that both President Hoover and himself had felt that personal and informal communications had been so helpful in removing misunderstandings that it had been agreed between them to suggest to the other Governments that would participate in the forthcoming Five-Power Conference that they might pursue the same method; that Mr. MacDonald had seen the French and Japanese Ambassadors and had made the same suggestion to them; and that he would be very glad to have any message from any one of the Governments concerned upon points which they might wish to raise at the conference or upon which they might wish to exchange views with His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom.

4. The Ambassador replied that the Italian Government had got into communication with the French Government, but that the conversations had been suspended owing to a change in the French Cabinet. These conversations were to be resumed. His Excellency added that Italy would certainly seek naval parity with France. Italy was not much interested in submarines if an agreement could be arrived at, but he would report what had passed between him and the Prime Minister to his Government. M. Bordonaro was leaving for Italy on the 15th instant, and would pursue the subject at Rome.

5. The Ambassador then enquired when the statement which had been promised in the invitation of His Majesty's Government regarding the agenda of the conference would be issued. To this the Prime Minister replied that the matter was under consideration, and that the statement would be issued as quickly as possible.

6. The Italian Ambassador also asked about the composition of the British delegation, and was informed of the action which had been taken up to date, with the promise that he would be communicated with as soon as

a final decision had been reached with regard to the number of British delegates.

7. In conclusion, the Prime Minister drew M. Bordonaro's attention to the instructions which had been issued to your Excellency in my telegram No. 198 of the 9th November.<sup>1</sup>

I am, &c.

ARTHUR HENDERSON

<sup>1</sup> No. 85.

## No. 91

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir J. Tilley (Tokyo)*

*No. 192 Telegraphic [A 7662/30/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, November 16, 1929

Your telegram No. 232<sup>1</sup> (of November 15: Japanese comment on British attitude towards 70 per cent ratio).

Report which appeared in British<sup>2</sup> press does not correctly reproduce the tenour of the conversation which took place between the Prime Minister and the Japanese Ambassador on November 11 when the latter expressed the hope that whatever agreement might be arrived at between Great Britain and the United States would not be on such a basis as to necessitate further construction by Japan; for example if Great Britain maintained fifteen 8-inch cruisers as against 18 for the United States of America, Japan would require to add 20,000 tons to her present programme while if the United States maintained 21 of the above units it would necessitate additional Japanese construction to the amount of 40,000 tons. These figures were calculated upon the American programme.

Mr. Matsudaira also expressed on behalf of his Government the hope that Great Britain would not object to Japan having 70 per cent ratio in relation to Great Britain or the United States, whichever of the two fleets was the stronger, and further that this ratio would apply to all categories of war vessels with the exception of capital ships.

In replying that he would note what His Excellency had said and would in due course furnish him with a memorandum as soon as there had been time to consider his points, the Prime Minister expressed surprise that an American strength of eighteen 8-inch cruisers as opposed to 15 for Great Britain would necessitate additional construction for Japan. In return for certain compensations in the matter of small vessels this country would accept fifteen 8-inch vessels as against 18 for the United States and regard this as parity. Mr. MacDonald also hoped that the present Japanese strength, which he understood to be twelve 8-inch cruisers, would be accepted as an equilibrium; and that the United States, Great Britain and

<sup>1</sup> In this telegram (not printed) Sir J. Tilley reported a statement in the *Japan Advertiser* that Mr. MacDonald had refused the Japanese demands.

<sup>2</sup> This word appears to be a mistake. The reference would seem to be to the *Japan Advertiser*. This paper was under American ownership.



Japan, as the three great naval Powers, would rest content with an 8-inch cruiser ratio of 18 : 15 : 12.<sup>1</sup>

Repeated to Washington No. 582.

<sup>1</sup> In a despatch of November 18 to Sir J. Tilley Mr. Henderson added that Mr. Matsudaira had given as the chief reasons for his instructions (i) the length of the Japanese coast-line, (ii) the large number of Japanese in China needing protection, (iii) the Japanese requirements in imports of food and raw materials and the low capacity of Japan for the rapid building of ships in case of urgent need.

## No. 92

*Mr. A. Henderson to Mr. R. I. Campbell (Washington)*  
*No. 584 Telegraphic [A 7661/30/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, November 16, 1929

Your telegram No. 545<sup>1</sup> (of November 14 Naval Disarmament).

You should speak in the sense of my telegram No. 571.<sup>2</sup>

If you have not meanwhile spoken to the Under-Secretary of State, you might now await return of Secretary of State on Monday.

You should begin by explaining that my telegram No. 571 was despatched before we had seen Secretary of State's *aide-mémoire*; that we fully agree with the forceful arguments employed in the *aide-mémoire*; but that it would probably be unwise for precisely the same language to be held to the Japanese Ambassadors in Washington and London.

As regards paragraph two of your telegram, position is as follows: if United States 8-inch cruiser tonnage can be reduced to 180,000, settlement of Japanese ratio difficulty will still be difficult but not impossible; if United States 8-inch cruiser strength were to remain at a higher figure than 180,000, settlement of Japanese difficulty would appear to be impossible without some addition to projected British 8-inch cruiser tonnage. Japanese claim to 70 per cent ratio is based on tonnage and not on numbers of ships—and the displacement tonnage of their twelve 8-inch ships built and building is only 108,400.

<sup>1</sup> No. 83.

<sup>2</sup> No. 37.

## No. 93

*Mr. R. I. Campbell (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson*  
*(Received November 20)*

*No. 550 Telegraphic [A 7820/30/45]*

Your telegram No. 584.<sup>1</sup>

WASHINGTON, November 19, 1929

I spoke to Secretary of State yesterday afternoon in the sense of your telegram No. 571.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No. 92.

<sup>2</sup> At the request of Mr. Stimson Mr. Campbell sent to him after this interview an *aide-mémoire* containing the message which he had delivered from His Majesty's Government on

Secretary of State said he agreed that Japanese Government could be told that both United States Government and His Majesty's Government feel confident of guaranteeing a solution of problem of parity as between themselves when conference meets; that question of size of Japanese ratio was intimately associated with bridging of gap between United States and Great Britain and that both Governments felt that both questions could most appropriately be left for final decision when conference assembles.

Secretary of State said he considered it highly important that we should keep each other fully informed of all conversations with other four Powers in the interval before conference, so that we might each have guidance for efforts for removal of any difficulties. Otherwise there was risk of our being confronted with situation where, on meeting in London, other Powers 'nailed themselves to the cross of patriotism' and it would be difficult for us to move them or for them to remove themselves from their positions. It was for this reason he had communicated to you his *aide-mémoire* on Japanese claim. He begged me to ask you by telegraph to give him full and early information on your conversations with the French and Italian governments as soon as possible for time was the essence of the matter. He would also be glad of any information you may have on Franco-Italian conversations.

He would be interested to know what statement of their claims Japanese Government had made to you and what you were replying.<sup>3</sup>

the subject of the wish of the Japanese Government for an increase in their cruiser ratio. This *aide-mémoire*, which followed the instructions in No. 87, and a covering letter are printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1929, vol. i, pp. 278-81. For Mr. Stimson's reply, see No. 98.

<sup>3</sup> See No. 97, p. 146, note 1.

## No. 94

*Mr. Atherton to Sir R. Vansittart (Received November 19)*

[A 7767/30/45]

UNITED STATES EMBASSY, LONDON, *November 19, 1929*

My dear Vansittart,

On Friday last<sup>1</sup> the French naval attaché handed to the Secretary of State the following questions:

'(1) Are the categories of the modified French formula to be adhered to at the London Conference? We understand that the number of these categories is to be five instead of four.

'(2) Is a certain percentage of transfer between these categories to be considered?

'(3) What is the tentative Anglo-American agreement on the following points?

'(a) Battleships. Abolition by age.

'(b) Aircraft carriers.

<sup>1</sup> November 15. This memorandum and a summary of the reply were communicated to Mr. Campbell by the Department of State on November 15 and telegraphed by him on this date to the Foreign Office.

'(c) Cruisers. Is there a definite agreement reached for the total tonnage of this class and for the proportion between 10,000 and smaller cruisers?

'(d) Destroyers.

'(e) Submarines.'

In reply on Monday morning the Secretary of State handed him an aide-mémoire, a copy of which is attached to this note.

Under instructions from Washington I am forwarding these copies of the questions and aide-mémoire for the Prime Minister's information.

Yours sincerely,

RAY ATHERTON

ENCLOSURE IN NO. 94

*Aide-mémoire*

You have asked me for information on certain points in connexion with the forthcoming London Conference.

It is presumed that by the words 'modified formula' you refer to the proposal presented at the twenty-sixth meeting of the third session of the Preparatory Commission, the 11th April, 1927, by M. Paul-Boncour. This proposal was subsequently modified in formal conversations in Paris between Vice-Admiral Kelly and M. Saluan, Chief of Staff of the French Marine, and in similar conversations between Commander Sablé, French naval attaché in Washington, and Admirals Jones and Long of the General Board, United States Navy. The conversations in Paris and Washington covered five categories, namely, capital ships, aircraft carriers, cruisers 10,000 to 1,850 tons, destroyers 1,850 to 600 tons, and submarines. The recent tentative discussions between Great Britain and the United States have dealt similarly with five categories, namely, battleships, aircraft carriers, cruisers, destroyers and submarines.

While the question of percentage of transfer between categories has not been considered in the discussions between Great Britain and the United States, this country will look sympathetically on the raising of the question at the forthcoming conference in the hope that it will aid France and Italy in the solution of their respective problems due to their special needs.

There has been no difficulty in agreement between Great Britain and the United States on any of the points mentioned. Certain matters have been discussed, and tentative understandings arrived at, as follows:

- (a) *Battleships*.—The general principle of reduction of the battleship fleet has been agreed upon, but the question of method will be left entirely to the forthcoming conference.
- (b) *Aircraft carriers*.—The question has not been discussed and will be left entirely to the forthcoming conference.
- (c) *Cruisers*.—A comparison of the cruiser fleets of the two Powers resulted in placing the tentative figure of 339,000 tons for Great Britain and 315,000 tons for the United States as the figures which best suited the relative needs of the two Powers. There is no agreement on a

proportion between the number of 10,000 and the number of smaller cruisers, and the question of numbers of such units is still to be agreed upon, the United States desiring twenty-one and Great Britain fifteen such cruisers.

- (d) *Destroyers*.—No figure has been agreed upon, this question being left open to the conference. It is the desire of both Powers to reduce, however, and a figure below 200,000 tons might be expected to be satisfactory.
- (e) *Submarines*.—Both nations have expressed their willingness to abolish the submarine in case all other countries would do the same. It is the desire of both countries likewise to reduce the tonnage of this type if it is maintained, but no definite figures have been set, the whole question being left to the conference.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, *November 18, 1929.*

### No. 95

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir J. Tilley (Tokyo)*  
*No. 195 Telegraphic [A 7584/30/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 20, 1929*

My telegram No. 192 of November 16:<sup>1</sup> Naval disarmament.

Japanese Ambassador saw the Prime Minister on November 18. Mr. Matsudaira asked whether Mr. MacDonald had any further communication to make on the claim of the Japanese Government to a 70 per cent. ratio, as reported at the interview of November 11. Mr. MacDonald said that he had not, but that he strongly advised Mr. Matsudaira to let the matter rest. Mr. MacDonald pointed out that Mr. Matsudaira had begged him to come to such an agreement with the United States as would not necessitate any new building on the part of Japan, and that he had taken this as a sincere request. Mr. MacDonald assured Mr. Matsudaira that it fitted in with his own ideas. If, however, Mr. Matsudaira wished to supplement that with a request that the Japanese Government might increase its ratio of building he would lay himself open to the charge or, at any rate, the suspicion that their real object was to increase the relative strength of the Japanese navy. That would have a very bad effect upon everybody concerned.

Mr. MacDonald explained to Mr. Matsudaira the general idea of His Majesty's Government. His Majesty's Government were undoubtedly working on tonnage figures, and also on the number of ships, and that in the end would have to be the form which any agreement took. What they were really driving at was to get to an agreement upon what would be a state of equilibrium, and they were working on the assumption that, if Japan would agree to twelve 8-inch cruisers, the United States to eighteen and His Majesty's Government to fifteen, they would regard those as figures of equilibrium in that particular class of vessel.

<sup>1</sup> No. 91.

Mr. Matsudaira emphasised the necessity of Japan's possessing the means of security, and on this Mr. MacDonald had two observations to make: firstly, that in these modern days security was being sought far more in the effective creation of a peace organisation than in competitive and comparative building; and secondly, that Japan would have to be very careful that in seeking her own security she did not upset the sense of security of other nations. Nobody wanted Japan to be insecure, nor did any nation wish to feel insecure herself.

Mr. MacDonald emphasised that the conversations he was having with Mr. Matsudaira were a kind of process of thinking aloud, and that he was not negotiating with him but was surveying with him the elements of the problem to which His Majesty's Government and the Japanese Government were to come to close grips when the Five-Power Conference entered upon its work. (Repeated to Washington, No. 588.)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Campbell was instructed to inform the Secretary of State as soon as possible of the substance of this conversation. See below, No. 97, p. 146, note 1.

## No. 96

*Mr. R. I. Campbell (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson*  
(Received November 21)

*No. 553 Telegraphic [A 7853/30/45]*

WASHINGTON, November 20, 1929

My telegram No. 550.<sup>1</sup>

I also spoke in the sense of penultimate paragraph of your telegram No. 584.<sup>2</sup>

Japanese demand has clearly rather upset the Secretary of State and he did not I think entirely relish the message in paragraphs 2 and 3 of your telegram No. 571.<sup>3</sup> He said that, at the Washington Conference, United States had hoped they had disposed of the Pacific question by concession as to non-fortification of bases there and by granting a ratio which, as between United States and Japan, was in effect 3-3 'by the time United States got there'. In many quarters this had never been popular. If the Japanese were now to insist on higher ratio there would be an outcry, especially amongst Americans in the Pacific Islands, which would endanger treaty provisions as to the Pacific bases. He knew what he was saying in speaking thus. The Navy Department had always desired an agreement on cruisers to be based on an equal total tonnage limitation, each party being left to decide what type of ship to build within that limitation. They had never liked what they considered an attempt by us to impose on them a type they thought useless for their purposes, while limiting number of 8-inch gun cruisers, type they considered the only suitable one. This it had to be admitted was a fairly reasonable position. But they had been brought round to accept the present understanding. If we now use the Japanese demand

<sup>1</sup> No. 93.

<sup>2</sup> No. 92.

<sup>3</sup> No. 87.

as leverage for reducing American number of 8-inch cruisers, they could hardly think it reasonable. Japanese, he felt, were really only attempting to save face. Perhaps we all were to a certain degree. Japanese were, he knew, anxious to reduce as far as possible, just as he was himself ('in fact the more Ramsay MacDonald is able to come down from 339,000 the better I would be pleased'). Their claim for 20,000 tons added to their 8-inch gun tonnage, if the United States retained 18, was, he thought, an attempt to scare us, presumably in the hope that we should try and persuade the United States to reduce their figures so that Japan could attain 70 per cent. without increasing construction. He asked whether the Prime Minister would admit claim. I said I felt sure His Majesty's Government's attitude was that they hoped Japanese would rest content with their present programme of 8-inch ships building and built. He then asked whether I had any news from you about the Singapore base and said he had noticed that Japanese Ambassador here was reported as thinking that permanent suspension of its development might give Japan assurances that would off-set Japanese claims to larger ratio (the only statement I have seen to this effect is in message from Washington correspondent of 'New York Times' who attributes it to 'diplomatic circles').

Secretary of State more than once asked what His Majesty's Government were saying to Japanese Government.

I gathered the impression that, in view of his expressed strong opposition to Japanese demand, Secretary of State had at the back of his mind a fear lest we might not so much be dealing with it on its demerits from our point of view as using it as a not altogether fair means of securing to our own advantage the greatest possible reduction in the United States 8-inch ships (in this connexion see paragraph 2 of my telegram No. 545<sup>1</sup> last two sentences). Moreover, from manner of his question as to Singapore and conversations with Japanese Ambassador in London, I also gathered the impression that Secretary of State was the victim of at least the germ of an idea that we might, in our conversations with the Japanese, be trying in some way to win a point or two against the Americans.

Mr. Cotton was present at the interview.

<sup>1</sup> No. 88.

## No. 97

*Mr. A. Henderson to Mr. R. I. Campbell (Washington)*

*No. 593 Telegraphic [A 7820/30/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, November 22, 1929

Your telegram No. 550<sup>1</sup> (of November 19: Naval Disarmament).

We entirely share the Secretary of State's views regarding the advisability of each of the two Governments keeping the other fully and urgently informed of their conversations with the other three interested Powers.

<sup>1</sup> No. 93.

You have already received by telegraph the substance of the two conversations that have so far taken place between the Prime Minister and the Japanese Ambassador.<sup>1</sup>

On November 11 and 12 Mr. MacDonald also saw the French and Italian Ambassadors. Records of these conversations have gone to you by last bag but, in view of your telegram, I send you the following telegraphic summary for the information of the Secretary of State.<sup>2</sup>

M. de Fleuriau expressed M. Briand's hope that belligerent rights would not be raised at the conference and he was assured that so far as His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom were concerned the subject would not be raised, and further that during the Prime Minister's visit to Washington he had invited Mr. Hoover's attention to the obligations assumed by Great Britain under Article 16 of the League Covenant which His Majesty's Government could in no way violate. M. de Fleuriau, who afterwards left for Paris to consult his Government, was also informed that it was the intention of His Majesty's Government to raise at the conference the question of the size and age of capital ships as well as the calibre of their main armament. Mr. MacDonald also remarked that a destroyer agreement would have to depend mainly upon an agreement regarding submarines.

In speaking to the Italian Ambassador the Prime Minister explained that both President Hoover and himself had felt that personal and informal communications had been so helpful in removing misunderstanding that they had agreed to suggest to the other participating Governments that they might pursue the same method. M. Bordonaro replied that the conversations which his Government had initiated with the French Government had been temporarily suspended owing to the French ministerial crisis, but were about to be resumed. Italy, who was not much interested in submarines if an agreement could be arrived at, would certainly seek naval parity with France.

M. Bordonaro left for Italy on November 15 to consult his Government.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Campbell had sent to the Secretary of State an *aide-mémoire* on November 21 recording the substance of these conversations. The *aide-mémoire* is printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1929*, vol. i, pp. 284-6.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Campbell carried out these instructions in an *aide-mémoire* of November 23. This *aide-mémoire* is printed in op. cit., pp. 286-7.

## No. 98

*Mr. R. I. Campbell (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson*  
(Received November 24)

*No. 559 Telegraphic [A 7904/30/45]*

WASHINGTON, November 23, 1929

My telegrams Nos. 550<sup>1</sup> and 553.<sup>2</sup>

Secretary of State has written to me in reference to the *aide-mémoire* for which he had asked me giving substance of your telegram No. 571.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No. 93.

<sup>2</sup> No. 96.

<sup>3</sup> No. 87.

Point No. 1 in your telegram; Secretary of State agrees.

Point No. 2. He does not agree that it is the United States 'desire for a programme of 8-inch gun cruisers' that constitutes difficulty with Japan. He would be inclined to put reasons for difficulty in British demands for total cruiser tonnage but thinks that this difference of approach is more or less inherent to our two somewhat different points of view.

Secretary of State says the same comment applies in a less degree to Point 3.

No. 99

*Mr. A. Henderson to Mr. R. I. Campbell (Washington)*

*No. 1634 [A 7896/30/45]*

Sir,

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 25, 1929*

The United States Ambassador was received by the Prime Minister on the morning of the 18th November.

2. General Dawes stated that he was going to see the Japanese Ambassador in half-an-hour's time, and in these circumstances he wished to discuss the line which he should take in regard to the Japanese proposal for a 70 per cent. ratio in auxiliary vessels. The Prime Minister replied that he himself was to see Mr. Matsudaira after lunch, and proposed to urge his Excellency not to press his demands at the moment. Mr. MacDonald would add that he had noted the representations which the Japanese Ambassador had made on the subject, but would urge upon his Excellency the advisability of the three chief naval Powers agreeing upon an equilibrium in 8-inch gun vessels. Such an equilibrium should be translated into any ratio considered suitable. General Dawes agreed with the above and indicated that he shared the views expressed by Mr. MacDonald.

3. The United States Ambassador then asked about British representation at the forthcoming conference, intimating that if Mr. Gibson and himself were to be appointed members of the United States delegation the United States would have six delegates. The Prime Minister replied that the question of British representation had been under discussion, but that no final decision had yet been reached. His present idea was that His Majesty's Government might be content with four delegates, in view of the representation of the Dominions. In undertaking to let the Ambassador know definitely later, Mr. MacDonald added that His Majesty's Government had no objection to the appointment of six delegates by the Government of the United States, because it would be clearly understood that if any voting took place the number of delegates in each delegation would in no way influence the decision.

I am, &c.

ARTHUR HENDERSON



*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received November 26)*  
*No. 785 [A 8004/30/45]*

Sir,

ROME, November 22, 1929

With reference to my despatch No. 757<sup>1</sup> of the 11th instant, I have the honour to report that the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs gave me this morning the following information regarding the Franco-Italian conversations in preparation for the forthcoming Disarmament Conference.

2. Signor Grandi said that the first conversation which the Italian Ambassador in Paris had had with M. Berthelot<sup>2</sup> had been highly encouraging. M. Berthelot had indicated that there ought to be little difficulty in meeting the Italian wishes. But the conversation which Count Manzoni subsequently held with M. Briand had not been equally satisfactory. M. Briand had promised nothing and his remarks had been of a most general character. He had asked what Italy thought of the proposal for a Mediterranean Locarno and, further, what would be the Italian attitude on the submarine question. Matters had gone no further and the above was the present position.

3. Signor Grandi emphasised that the present Italian Government, which held so strongly to its prestige, could not be expected to give up, in respect to lighter vessels, the position secured by a previous and non-Fascist Government in respect to capital ships. His Excellency continued that in so far as the submarine question was concerned, the ideas held by himself and Admiral Sirianni were gaining ground every day and the naval authorities had almost been brought round. It was possible, however, that Italy might have to adopt a non-committal attitude in the matter as a sacrifice on the altar of 'Parity' (see paragraph 3 of my despatch under reference). I asked Signor Grandi whether it had yet been decided who would represent Italy at the Conference? He replied in the negative but said that it might be taken as practically certain that he himself and Admiral Sirianni would be two of the Delegates appointed. It had struck me at the time that the last sentence of the Italian *Note Verbale* of November 14th (see my telegram No. 132<sup>3</sup> of that date) was specially intended to safeguard the possible appointment of Admiral Sirianni to be one of the Delegates. Although the Admiral may be exposed to the objection of being an expert in naval matters, he is a moderate and broad-minded man on terms of close friendship with Signor Grandi and is now rather a politician than a seaman, and I believe that from our point of view and that of the Conference his appointment as Delegate is one to be desired.

4. Finally, Signor Grandi said that while the Italian Ambassador in Washington was being kept informed, to a certain extent, by Mr. Stimson of American ideas and intentions in view of the forthcoming Conference, no similar information whatever as regards British ideas had been vouch-

<sup>1</sup> No. 86.

<sup>2</sup> Secretary-General at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>3</sup> Not printed.

safed in London. The Italian Government would greatly appreciate any indication of our views which could be afforded to them, and he would be grateful if I would call your attention to the matter.

I have, &c.,

R. GRAHAM

**No. 101**

*Mr. A. Henderson to Mr. R. I. Campbell (Washington)*

*Nos. 604, 605 and 606 Telegraphic [A 7853/30/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 26, 1929*

Your telegram No. 553 of November 20.<sup>1</sup>

There is of course no foundation for Mr. Stimson's misgivings to which you refer in the penultimate paragraph. We have always maintained that no satisfactory settlement was likely to be reached until some means had been found of enabling the United States to reduce its programme for 8-inch cruisers to eighteen. This remains our view, not solely on account of the Japanese ratio difficulty, so that it cannot reasonably be thought that we are utilising the Japanese demand merely as a means of securing the greatest possible reduction in United States 8-inch ships.

Since despatch of your telegram you will have received my telegram No. 195<sup>2</sup> to Tokyo, from which you will have seen that the Prime Minister on November 18 strongly discouraged the Japanese demand for an increased ratio, and stated that His Majesty's Government would regard the figures of eighteen for the United States, fifteen for the British Empire and twelve for Japan as making it possible to reach a state of equilibrium for the whole cruiser class.

We believe that we are entirely in agreement with the United States Government on this question and are pursuing the same objective, though we think it would be unwise to use precisely the same arguments in London and Washington.

You should therefore make a point of disabusing the Secretary of State's mind of any misapprehensions he may have on this point.

As regards Singapore base, it is important to make it perfectly clear that His Majesty's Government have no intention of allowing it to enter as a bargaining factor into the naval negotiations.

<sup>1</sup> No. 96.

<sup>2</sup> No. 95.

**No. 102**

*Mr. A. Henderson to Mr. R. H. Campbell (Paris)*

*No. 2513 [A 7965/30/45]*

Sir,

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 26, 1929*

The French Ambassador was received by the Prime Minister on the morning of the 22nd November.

2. M. de Fleuriau stated that M. Briand had instructed him to say that the question of French naval strength was being considered by the appropriate committee, and that it would be a little time before the examination was finished. His Excellency also said that M. Briand would be very glad to learn the reasons which had moved His Majesty's Government to decide upon fifty cruisers as their standard requirement. Had this figure been selected on account of the length of the British coastline or, if not, on what grounds?

3. On the first point Mr. MacDonald urged the desirability of expediting a report from the French Naval Committee as time was passing, and for at least a fortnight the Christmas holidays would interfere with work.

4. On the second point the Prime Minister replied that His Majesty's Government had not worked out any kind of 'yardstick' of requirements, but had drawn upon their experience and had come to the conclusion that, given a certain security for peace and certain agreements which Mr. MacDonald thought were possible, a strength of fifty cruisers would meet British needs.

5. The French Ambassador then enquired whether His Majesty's Government had any ideas regarding other types of ships such as destroyers. The Prime Minister answered that he would be perfectly frank. Influenced by considerations based upon their size, their guns and their vulnerability, His Majesty's Government were coming more and more to the conclusion that capital ships were not worth the money they cost to construct.

6. As regards cruisers, Mr. MacDonald explained that the figures that had been published, namely, fifteen 8-inch-gun cruisers and thirty-five 6-inch-gun ships, were the standard figures upon which His Majesty's Government had been working.

7. With reference to destroyers, the Prime Minister intimated that His Majesty's Government were prepared to reduce the tonnage of these ships if a satisfactory agreement on submarines could be arrived at, adding that destroyer tonnage was dependent upon submarine tonnage.

8. In so far as submarines were concerned His Majesty's Government would be entirely willing to do without them altogether. Unless an international agreement on the subject could be concluded, however, it would be useless to pursue that point. His Majesty's Government would hope that all nations using submarines would reach an understanding which would entail a reduction of these craft.

9. In conclusion M. de Fleuriau stated that M. Briand had decided to attend the conference, and that M. Tardieu<sup>1</sup> would also do his utmost to attend, at any rate for the opening. The Prime Minister expressed his satisfaction at this information.

I am, &c.,

ARTHUR HENDERSON

<sup>1</sup> President of the Council.

*Mr. A. Henderson to Mr. R. I. Campbell (Washington)*

*Nos. 610 and 611 Telegraphic [A 8105/30/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 29, 1929*

Your telegram No. 562 of November 27:<sup>1</sup> Naval disarmament.

We have prepared the following draft agenda and suggestions for procedure at the Naval Conference:

'The conference will be held in St. James's Palace, except for the opening public plenary sitting, which will be held in the Royal Gallery of the House of Lords.

'I. Public plenary sitting of the conference on Tuesday, 21st January, at 10.30 a.m. Selection of chairman, vice-chairman and secretary-general. Speech of welcome by the Prime Minister and replies in general terms by heads of other delegations.

'II. Private plenary session of the conference to begin on Wednesday, 22nd January, at 10 a.m.

'(a) United Kingdom delegation will make a general survey of the whole field of naval disarmament and offer its proposals for the reduction of naval armament and for an agreement covering all classes of combatant ships. Similar speeches covering the whole ground will be made by each delegation in turn.

'(b) On the termination of these declarations it is suggested that the conference should discuss procedure and should appoint two committees:

'(i) The first committee consisting preferably of not more than three delegates from each of the countries represented, supported by a minimum number of advisers and experts.

'(ii) A committee to advise on all matters relating to procedure. This committee on procedure would be composed of the senior delegate, and not more than one other delegate, of each country represented at the conference. The object of the committee would be to deal with questions of programme and procedure both at the outset and at every stage of the conference.

'III. The first committee, after the selection of a chairman and a vice-chairman, will take up the discussion at the point at which it was left by the full conference. It is suggested that the committee should deal separately with all classes of combatant vessels, the order in which the classes is dealt with being determined by the committee. (It is thought to be undesirable that separate committees should deal with each separate class owing to the inter-connexion of the classes in relation to the problem of naval reduction as a whole.) The first committee will be empowered to appoint sub-committees, either of the same general character or of a purely technical character, to deal with special points as they arise in the course of the discussions. These committees will report to the first committee.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. This telegram referred to the transmission of information about the naval conversations.

'The first committee will also consider the question of the transfer of tonnage between categories.

'IV. When the chairman of the first committee considers the work of this committee to be terminated, the committee will report to the conference, which will thereupon reassemble in plenary session.'

In communicating the agenda to the interested Powers, it is proposed to add a statement that His Majesty's Government consider that the aim of the conference should be 'to attain agreement on the reduction of existing naval strength and programmes and on the limitation of war-vessels on the basis of mutually accepted strengths. They suggest that the date by which this agreed equilibrium is to be reached should be 31st December, 1936, and that the same basis of agreed strength should continue to regulate the navies of the several Powers until it is revised at a later conference.'

It is proposed that French and English should be the languages used at the conference.

You should ask the Secretary of State privately and unofficially whether he agrees in principle with the above, adding that His Majesty's Government wish to communicate the agenda to the interested Governments immediately, but that they desire to enquire in advance whether United States Government are in general agreement, subject, of course, to any observations which they may desire to offer at a later stage.

The fact that we are consulting the United States Government in advance of other Governments should of course be regarded as strictly confidential, and I should prefer that a copy of the proposed agenda should not be left with the State Department at this stage.

#### No. 104

*Mr. R. I. Campbell (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson*  
(Received December 1)

*No. 564 Telegraphic [A 8109/30/45]*

WASHINGTON, November 30, 1929

Your telegrams Nos. 610 and 611.<sup>1</sup>

Secretary of State returned from Long Island this morning, and I saw him this afternoon. I told him the object of my visit as instructed in your telegram No. 611 and that you wished to communicate agenda to other interested Powers immediately. He said at once and before I could begin reading him draft agenda that his thoughts were so preoccupied by the Chinese-Soviet dispute (he had just had interviews with the German and Japanese Ambassadors) and that his was such a one-tracked mind that he preferred not to discuss the question of the naval conference agenda until he had been able to clear his thoughts and turn the matter over in his mind. He had not yet been able to give the matter serious attention beyond reaching the following conclusion of which he asked me to inform you at once. He

<sup>1</sup> No. 103.

thought it of the utmost importance that United Kingdom delegation in opening conference should confine its speech to general platitudes. Otherwise if British delegation announced a plan, United States delegation would have to follow suit and the others would do the same. This would, he feared, result in all—particularly the French and to a less degree the Japanese—at once ‘digging in’. Even if first session were not public the press would inevitably find out approximately what had been done and would take up in each country strongly nationalist lines in defence of its delegation’s proposals. It would certainly happen with United States press, and he would probably find himself forced to stand by his announced plan. He was already having difficulty with the Navy Department, who wished him to draw up and adhere to such written plan but he was refusing to do so. Mr. Hughes at Washington Conference had been able to announce a plan and succeed with it; but then he was offering a proposal for such extensive United States scrapping that the procedure was justified as other Powers were certain to agree. None of the invited Powers was, Mr. Stimson considered, in such a position now. The French and Japanese had their minds full of demands which would complicate matters and cause difficulties. He thought that there was a way round so long as they were not given a chance to dig their last line trench at the outset; but the formal announcement of proposals at the first session would not only give them a chance but almost compel them to do so. He felt no statement of proposals should be made until during the course of the conference Governments of United Kingdom and United States saw that they themselves had been able to reach agreement on their own remaining differences.

Mr. Stimson asked me to come back on Monday<sup>1</sup> when I could read him your draft (which he did not give me opportunity of doing) and go over it point by point.

<sup>1</sup> December 2.

## No. 105

*Mr. R. I. Campbell (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson*  
(Received December 2)

*No. 565 Telegraphic [A 8119/30/45]*

WASHINGTON, December 1, 1929

My telegram No. 564.<sup>1</sup>

I venture to think that as far as concerns effect on this country of formal announcement of proposals at first session there is a good deal in what Secretary of State says. I have always felt the course of Geneva Conference of 1927 was unfavourably affected at the outset by the procedure at the first session when carefully prepared proposals were read out by delegations in turn. United States delegation read theirs first and British delegation

<sup>1</sup> No. 104.

followed. Both proposals thus acquired for United States press and public the characteristic of a mere proposal and counter-proposal each flatly rejecting the other rather than that of simultaneous contributions to a solution between which a compromise could be reached in the Conference satisfactory to both.

Written instructions of the United States delegation on that occasion already of course drove them towards a rigid attitude as well as lack of elasticity on the part of Administration, and Mr. Stimson no doubt does not want the President's and his greater readiness to compromise to be nullified by the tendency of written and formally adopted plans to develop a sacred nature: but it was largely the formal announcement of an American proposal which led to press and public adopting it to the exclusion of everything else, defiantly—defending it as sacrosanct and thus encouraging, if not forcing, the United States delegation to be unyielding.

### No. 106

*Mr. R. I. Campbell (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson*  
(Received December 1)

*No. 566 Telegraphic [A 8135/30/45]*

WASHINGTON, December 1, 1929

My telegram No. 564.

While speaking in the sense reported in my telegram under reference Secretary of State incidentally said he thought it might be necessary to agree that as far as France was concerned an agreement reached at London should be only tentative pending general disarmament discussions at Geneva. This need not however prevent other Powers represented at London conference making binding agreement as between themselves.

I was able during the conversation to take the opportunity of speaking as instructed in your telegrams Nos. 604, 605 and 606,<sup>1</sup> and think Secretary of State is not now under any misapprehensions.

<sup>1</sup> No. 101

### No. 107

*Mr. R. I. Campbell (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson*  
(Received December 3)

*No. 567 Telegraphic [A 8150/30/45]*

WASHINGTON, December 2, 1929

My telegram No. 564.

I saw the Secretary of State and Mr. Marriner this afternoon.

Secretary of State reiterated earnestly and emphatically but in the friendliest manner and solely with the success of conference in view objections

he saw to suggestion in paragraph II (a) of your telegram No. 610.<sup>1</sup> He was strongly opposed to any speeches at the outset giving plans in any detail. He was convinced that no plenary session could be kept private certainly as far as the United States press was concerned. Speeches made in such a session would be irrevocably fastened on to each delegation for whom any material retreat would thenceforth become extremely difficult, any concessions nevertheless made would be given the aspect of defeat for one side and victory for the other and the whole meeting be given the appearance of a battlefield rather than a conference. Moreover, proposed procedure would result in versions of plans announced in speeches which press would undoubtedly somehow procure being garbled thus giving a splendid opportunity to any Shearers there might be. (Marriner referred on both these points to example of Geneva Conference.)

Secretary of State asked if there must be any speeches beside one of welcome by the Prime Minister at the public plenary session and possibly though not necessarily replies by other delegations: even these latter might give, e.g. the French, an undesirable opportunity publicly to take a fixed position. He repeated that he was sure no plans should be formally announced until the moment arrived when His Majesty's Government and the United States Government were sure that they could reach agreement.

Following alternate procedure was suggested by the Secretary of State and Mr. Marriner (1) public plenary session January 21 confined to speech of welcome by the Prime Minister (preferably no replies) and announcement of adjournment till if possible January 23 for (2) another public plenary session for the purpose of organisation only—selection of chairman etc., appointment and composition of committees and procedure, which matters would have been settled privately on January 22 between heads of delegations. Interval of one day would anyhow be more convenient to the United States delegation who would probably only arrive just in time for January 21.

As to the two proposed committees Secretary of State and Marriner would prefer that as far as the United States delegation is concerned all its seven members should be absorbed thereby. Whom to omit would present undesirable difficulties. Was it necessary to lay down the members<sup>2</sup> in advance?

Secretary of State presumed that you envisaged putting senior delegates on both committees. He observed that you considered that he should serve on the second and it seemed clear that he should serve on the first which would be the executive committee. He felt that he himself must certainly serve on the first but thought that service on both would be difficult. Was it necessary for senior delegates to serve on the second?

Secretary of State presumed that you regarded the British Empire delegation as representative of one country so that when you spoke of committees consisting of two or three delegates from each country this would mean as far as we were concerned three or two delegates from the British Empire as a whole.

Please also see my immediately following telegram.

<sup>1</sup> No. 103.

<sup>2</sup> This word may be a mistake for 'numbers'.



No. 108

*Mr. R. I. Campbell (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson*  
(Received December 3)

*No. 568 Telegraphic [A 8151/30/45]*

WASHINGTON, December 2, 1929

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

State Department fear that to omit any United States delegates from the committees would have unfortunate political results here. It would be dangerous to omit either or both Senators or Secretary of Navy whose presence is desirable to keep big navy people quiet. It seemed obviously desirable to include United States Ambassador in London on one of the Committees as also Mr. Gibson, who would be the only United States delegate conversant with League of Nations aspect of the questions which might arise.

As regards the service of Secretary of State on the second committee, Mr. Marriner suggests that, if this, as it seemed, was to be steering committee and derived its chief importance from that fact, presence of Mr. . . .<sup>2</sup> thereon would make the presence of Secretary of State less important. He thought that Secretary of State would not wish to be serving on Committees all the time.

I did not leave copy of the draft agenda at the State Department.

<sup>1</sup> No. 107.

<sup>2</sup> The text here is uncertain. The name is probably that of Mr. Morrow.

No. 109

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir J. Tilley (Tokyo)*

*No. 204 Telegraphic [A 8106/30/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, December 2, 1929

My telegram No. 195 of November 16:<sup>1</sup> Naval disarmament.

Japanese Ambassador saw the Prime Minister on November 29. He read to Mr. MacDonald a telegram which he had received from the Japanese Government regarding the conversation of November 18 recorded in my telegram under reference. The telegram reiterated the Japanese demand for a 70 per cent. ratio for all auxiliary vessels worked out in this way:

1. The percentage was to be on the total tonnage of all auxiliary ships.
2. It was to be a definite ratio as regards 8-inch cruisers, and was to be calculated on the tonnage used in these cruisers by the strongest Power.
3. Below 8-inch cruisers all categories were to be grouped, and what the Japanese Government proposed to do was to build their requirements in submarines, which were to amount to 80,000 total tons, provided there was an agreement, and if that tonnage amounted to more than

<sup>1</sup> No. 95.

70 per cent. of the tonnage used for submarines by the strongest of the Powers, the excess would be deducted from the category of smaller cruisers and destroyers.

The telegram mentioned a figure of 126,000 tons to be used for 8-inch cruisers, and pointed out that the Government wished to build two additional 8-inch cruisers of the smaller type now being built by Japan, and thus bring up their number from twelve to fourteen. Mr. MacDonald told Mr. Matsudaira that this was an impossible proposition so far as His Majesty's Government were concerned. Mr. Matsudaira pointed out that this would only be the figure during a short transitional period, and that it would ultimately rest at thirteen, the total tonnage of which would also be 126,000 tons. That was what the Japanese Government reckoned as 70 per cent. of a United States cruiser fleet of eighteen ships. Mr. MacDonald reminded Mr. Matsudaira that he had already told him that the United States had not agreed to the figure of eighteen and were asking for more. The figure that His Majesty's Government had been provisionally working upon was one of fifteen 8-inch cruisers, not all of which would be of 10,000 tons; but supposing they were all of that tonnage, that would be 150,000 tons, 70 per cent. of which was 105,000. Japan proposed to use 126,000, which meant superiority in tonnage in this one section of cruisers of 21,000 tons. (Actually it would be 20,800 tons.) Mr. MacDonald said that that was quite impossible.

Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Matsudaira went over the ground of numbers of ships, as opposed to amount of tonnage, such as was reported in the conversation of November 18. Mr. Matsudaira promised to send Mr. MacDonald the figures used in the telegram, so that he might have them accurately. Mr. Matsudaira repeated several times, in reply to Mr. MacDonald's request for a more definite programme regarding subsidiary ships, that Japan could not make a suggestion at this moment because everything depended upon the fixing of the ratio, and it is quite clear that what is in the mind of the Japanese Government is to fix a definite ratio for 8-inch cruisers, to build a force of submarines which it considers is necessary for its naval purposes, and then to adjust as regards small cruisers and destroyers a programme in relation to cruisers and submarines.

(Repeated to Washington, No. 616.)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Campbell was instructed to inform the Secretary of State of this conversation.

## No. 110

*Letter from Mr. Craigie to Mr. Atherton*

[A 7828/30/45]

My dear Atherton,

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 3, 1929*

I have been asked to let you know that the *aide-mémoire* on the naval question communicated by the Secretary of State to the French Naval Attaché at Washington, a copy of which you were good enough to enclose

in your letter to Vansittart of the 19th ultimo,<sup>1</sup> has been carefully considered here.

As regards categories, we are very interested to learn that in the later conversations between the French and yourselves the 'French formula' was modified so as to cover five categories, namely, capital ships, aircraft carriers, cruisers from ten thousand to one thousand eight hundred and fifty tons, destroyers from one thousand eight hundred and fifty to six hundred tons, and submarines. This division of categories would be fully in accordance with our views, and it is to be hoped that the French Government will see their way to abide by the formula which emerged from the unofficial conversations at Washington and Paris.

We also agree to what you said in regard to the percentage of transfer between categories, though in anything we say to the French we shall have to make it clear that we can only agree to this proposal in principle and must safeguard ourselves against the scheme being used to upset equilibrium in strength or to produce programmes of relatively unequal strength. Thus the percentage of transfer would have in any case to be a relatively small one. We also consider—and I believe that this is equally the view of the United States Government—that this principle would not apply to the two categories of capital ships and aircraft carriers. These are matters for consideration at the Conference, but it has been thought desirable that you should know our view on this point and we shall be glad to learn in due course whether the United States Government agree.

The only other observations I am asked to make relate to cruisers, and that is really merely a question of wording. The *aide-mémoire* states that 'there is no agreement on a proportion between the number of ten thousand and the number of smaller cruisers and the question of numbers of such units is still to be agreed upon, the United States desiring twenty one and Great Britain fifteen such cruisers'. This wording might possibly give the impression that, as things stand, we only desire to have fifteen 8-inch cruisers against the American twenty one 8-inch cruisers, although no final agreement on the point has been reached. The wording is the more open to such interpretation in that the sentence which introduces the discussion of the five categories of combatant ships runs as follows:

'Certain matters have been discussed and tentative understandings arrived at as follows:'

(The underlining is mine.)

We would, therefore, propose to say, in discussing this matter with the French Government that there is no agreement yet on a proportion between the number of ten thousand ton and the number of smaller cruisers, that we are anxious, if possible, not to add to our existing programme of fifteen 8-inch gun cruisers, but that, in order to obviate this, some means will have to be found to enable the United States Government to reduce their number of 8-inch cruisers from twenty one to eighteen.

As you will see, we only differ from you on points of detail and wording,

<sup>1</sup> No. 94.

and it is satisfactory that we can, if approached by the French or Italian Government with the same enquiries, give them an almost identical reply to that embodied in the *aide-mémoire*.

Believe me, etc.

R. L. CRAIGIE

### No. 111

*Mr. A. Henderson to Mr. R. I. Campbell (Washington)*

*No. 624 Telegraphic [A 8150/30/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 9, 1929*

Your telegrams Nos. 567 and 568 of December 2.<sup>1</sup>

The Secretary of State misunderstands His Majesty's Government's ideas regarding the purpose of the opening speeches.

You should accordingly communicate semi-officially and confidentially to the United States Government the amended agenda and outline of procedure of which the text is given in my immediately following telegram, and ask whether they desire to offer any observations upon it, adding the definition of the aim of the conference which is given in the last paragraph but three of my telegram No. 610.<sup>2</sup>

A similar communication is being addressed to the Governments of the other participating Powers.

<sup>1</sup> Nos. 107 and 108.

<sup>2</sup> No. 103.

### No. 112

*Mr. A. Henderson to Mr. R. I. Campbell (Washington)*<sup>1</sup>

*No. 625 Telegraphic [A 8150/30/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 9, 1929*

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>2</sup>

Draft agenda and suggestions for procedure:

The conference will be held in St. James's Palace, except for the opening public plenary sitting, which will be held in the Royal Gallery of the House of Lords.

1. Public plenary sitting of the conference on Tuesday, January 21, at 11 a.m. Selection of chairman, vice-chairman and secretary-general. Speech of welcome by the Prime Minister (briefly outlining history of naval disarmament, but avoiding details and making no specific proposals), and replies in general terms by heads of other delegations. The purpose of this is not to begin the discussions nor to state position of the delegates, but to get declarations of co-operation and desire to make conference successful.

2. Private plenary session of the conference to begin on Wednesday, January 23, at 10 a.m.

<sup>1</sup> Also to Paris, Rome, and Tokyo.

<sup>2</sup> No. 111.

It is suggested that this session should discuss procedure and should appoint two committees:

(i) The first committee, which, after the selection of a chairman and a vice-chairman, would enter upon the discussion of the naval disarmament question. It is suggested that the committee should deal separately and in turn with all classes of combatant vessels, the order in which the classes should be dealt with being determined by the committee. (It is thought to be undesirable that separate committees should deal with each separate class owing to the inter-connexion of the classes in relation to the problem of naval reduction as a whole.) The committee will also consider the question of the transfer of tonnage between categories. The first committee will be empowered to appoint sub-committees, either of the same general character or of a purely technical character, to deal with special points as they arise in the course of the discussions. These committees will report to the first committee.

(ii) A committee to advise on all matters relating to procedure. This committee on procedure would be composed of not more than two delegates from each country represented at the conference. The object of the committee would be to deal with questions of programme and procedure both at the outset and at every stage of the conference.

3. When the chairman of the first committee considers the work of this committee to be terminated, the committee will report to the conference, which will thereupon reassemble in plenary session.

4. It is proposed that French and English should be the official languages at the conference.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On December 11 Mr. Campbell was instructed to transmit to the Secretary of State a message from the Prime Minister giving further details about the proposed procedure at the opening session and with regard to the representation on the committees. The text of this message is printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1929*, vol. i, p. 297.

## No. 113

*Mr. A. Henderson to Mr. R. H. Campbell (Paris)*<sup>1</sup>

*No. 287 Telegraphic [A 8150/30/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 9, 1929*

My immediately following telegram<sup>2</sup> gives the text of the draft agenda and our suggestions for procedure at the Naval Conference.

In communicating this semi-officially and confidentially to the Government to which you are accredited, please state that His Majesty's Government propose to define the aim of the conference as being 'to attain agreement on the reduction of existing naval strength and programmes and on the limitation of war vessels on the basis of mutually accepted strengths. They suggest that the date by which this agreed equilibrium is to be reached should be 31st December, 1936, and that the same basis of agreed strength

<sup>1</sup> Also to Rome and Tokyo.

<sup>2</sup> No. 112.

should continue to regulate the navies of the several Powers until it is revised at a later conference.'

You should add that we should be glad to be informed at the earliest possible moment whether they desire to offer any observations upon these proposals.

## No. 114

*Note by Mr. Craigie of a conversation with the Italian Chargé d'Affaires*  
[A 8472/30/45]

December 10, 1929

The Italian Chargé d'Affaires called to see me today and stayed for an hour and a half discussing the naval question. Most of the time was occupied in giving him a complete statement of our proposals for the settlement of the naval disarmament question, although I impressed upon him that His Majesty's Government were taking up no rigid position and were going to make no hard and fast proposals to the Conference and trusted that the Italian Government would similarly avoid 'rigidity'. Having given Count Rogeri the full statement of our case, I asked him to beg his Government earnestly to let us have their views on our proposals at the earliest possible moment, as the time before the Conference was becoming very short and it was most desirable that we should each of us know beforehand what the attitude of the other was going to be in regard to the limitation of each category of combatant ship. This Count Rogeri undertook to do.

Referring to the difficulty with France, Count Rogeri stated that, while Italy would probably be satisfied, for the duration of the treaty, with a naval strength not far different from that which she possessed at present, and to this extent would not claim parity with France, she must nevertheless have the right to expand her navy if at any time she considered that the strategical situation had altered to her detriment; unlike France, Italy was dependent on sea communications for her supplies of food and material. I said that we fully sympathised with the latter consideration since we were in the same position ourselves, but I thought that his first argument was a very dangerous one: if we were all to keep up our sleeve a certain amount of extra tonnage for use in case of emergency or a change in the strategical position, surely the whole purpose of our naval agreement would be defeated since the element of competition and uncertainty would be retained. I said that His Majesty's Government had made great sacrifices in agreeing (a) to parity with the United States in principle, and (b) to allowing, as part of this system of parity, the United States to have an 8-inch gun cruiser fleet slightly superior to our own, and (c) reducing from 400,000 tons (the cruiser figure on which the three Power naval conference at Geneva broke down) to 339,000 tons. This His Majesty's Government were doing in reliance on the Kellogg Pact and the League of Nations, and they could never have done this if they had been influenced by considerations of possible changes in the 'strategical situation' to which the Chargé d'Affaires had referred. It

was felt here that we must all take certain 'risks for peace'. I hoped that Count Rogeri would impress these considerations upon his Government. Subject to their dislike of any proposal which might defeat our objective of limiting and reducing naval armament, I knew that His Majesty's Government quite appreciated Italy's position as an importer of fuel and food stuffs and would, so far as they were concerned, always take this consideration into account.

Count Rogeri promised to report all the above to his Government but stated that Italy's position and ours were very different because, whereas Italy was close to the heart of Europe and had certain turbulent neighbours whose policy might change the whole political and strategical situation for her in a short time, Great Britain's policy was not subject to the same dangers and fluctuations.

R. L. CRAIGIE

### No. 115

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir J. Tilley (Tokyo)*

*No. 220 Telegraphic [A 8378/30/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, December 11, 1929

My telegram No. 204 of December 2<sup>1</sup>: Naval disarmament.

Japanese Ambassador saw the Prime Minister on December 9. He called to receive observations upon figures which he had sent to Mr. MacDonald after the interview of November 29. Mr. MacDonald pointed out, as regards the proposal about 8-inch cruisers, that as Japan now stood she had 74 per cent. of British tonnage, and that His Majesty's Government could not reasonably be asked to agree to a higher percentage than that. Mr. Matsudaira repeated that Japan's national security compelled her to consider not Great Britain but whichever nation had the strongest navy. Mr. MacDonald again emphasised that the only way to come to an agreement was not for one of the three nations to build a standard determined by the strength of one of the others, because that would necessitate the third nation readjusting its standard, and consequently would involve an interminable series of adjustments and readjustments, which would be nothing more than competitive building.

As regards submarines, Mr. MacDonald explained that an 80,000 tonnage on the part of Japan would mean an increase of 10,000 tons over and above what had already been built, and that that would be in round figures 30,000 tons more than His Majesty's Government had at the moment put into their submarines. The need for this expansion did not seem apparent to Mr. MacDonald, who added that, whilst His Majesty's Government felt that it would be advisable to stop the use of this arm, at the same time they knew that certain other Powers could not agree with them, and His Majesty's Government therefore would not press their view unreasonably. British

<sup>1</sup> No. 109.

submarine building would have to be determined somewhat by European building. Mr. MacDonald thought it would not, therefore, be profitable to discuss precise figures at the present moment. But he warned Mr. Matsudaira that, if Japan was pursuing such an expansive programme in submarines, it would make it difficult for His Majesty's Government to fix as reasonable a figure from the point of view of reduction of strength and expenditure as they would like.

As regards Mr. Matsudaira's observations about the *Furutaka* class and the proposal to build fourteen 8-inch cruisers temporarily, bringing the number down, as the *Furutaka* class dropped out, to thirteen but retaining the same tonnage, Mr. MacDonald observed that the *Furutaka* class did not reach twenty years of age until 1946 and 1947, and that therefore a provisional agreement to accept fourteen 8-inch cruisers would in reality mean an agreement for sixteen or seventeen years. Mr. MacDonald thought that the House of Commons would laugh at him if he called such a period a provisional one.

(Repeated to Washington, No. 632.)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Campbell was instructed to inform the State Department orally of this interview.

#### No. 116

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received December 11)*

*No. 144 Telegraphic [A 8420/30/45]*

ROME, December 11, 1929

My despatch No. 794.<sup>1</sup>

I understand that Italian Government have finally decided to support our point of view on the submarine question.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. This despatch reported a statement by Signor Grandi to Sir R. Graham attributing to the French Government the responsibility for the delay in the Franco-Italian negotiations.

#### No. 117

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received December 16)*

*No. 150 Telegraphic [A 8539/30/45]*

ROME, December 15, 1929

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

1. Italian Government could not accept definition of aim of naval conference as formulated in proposal of British Government, if meaning of formula suggested were not first made perfectly clear in order to avoid all doubt or possibility of mistake in its interpretation.

Italian Government is ready to collaborate with the four other Powers

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. This telegram stated that the reply of the Italian Government was contained in telegram No. 150.



to attain agreement on reduction of existing naval strengths and programmes provided it is well understood that formula referred to above be not interpreted in the sense that the present state of naval armaments will be taken as point of departure in determining future balance of strengths between the various Powers, Italy being unable to accept a scheme of limitation which would have as a result creation of a condition of permanent inferiority to the detriment of such Powers as, inspired in practice with ideal of disarmament, of which so much has been spoken in the last ten years, have armed proportionately less than the others.

Formula indicated above would be acceptable to Italy only if it involved intention to reach an effective reduction by means of scrapping on the part of Powers whose constructions have been greatest.

2. For analogous reasons Italian Government must take exception to provisions suggested by British Government to the effect that date by which agreed equilibrium of forces is to be reached should be fixed at December 31, 1936.

On several occasions Italian Government has declared that it is disposed *a priori* to assume as limits of its armaments any figure whatsoever, even the lowest, provided that that figure be not exceeded by any other European continental Power. Italy remains loyal to that declaration but cannot accept a fixed period of time for effective completion of constructions necessary to reach strength agreed upon.

Such acceptance would bind Italy to an undesirable increase in her naval construction; while it would be . . .<sup>1</sup> if in future years increased security and reciprocal confidence led the Governments to diminish further of their own accord their existing or projected armaments. Until that may happen Italy proposes to reserve to herself the right to construct to the possible final limit referred to above but does not wish to be forced to do so, still less in a determined period of time, or fettered in any way by any naval programmes established in advance.

3. Second part of formula proposed by the British Government speaks of limitation of war vessels. It is of interest to Italian Government to know precise significance which is meant to be attached to this phrase. If it were to mean that agreement to be reached must fix rigid classification and limitation of characters of ships of various types (standardization) Italian Government would be obliged to make a general reserve relative to criteria of proposed classification.

4. For reasons set out above Italian Government asks itself whether it would not be preferable to define aim of conference by formula 'to attain agreement on reduction and limitation of naval armaments', unless it is considered useful to emphasise double aspect of conference, comprising (a) the carrying out of tasks laid down in article 21 of Washington Treaty, (b) limitation of craft not contemplated by the treaty. In that case a definition of aims of conference might be the following: 'to attain agreement on reduction of naval strengths and programmes as specified by Washington

<sup>1</sup> The text here is uncertain.

Treaty and on limitation of tonnage which has not been covered by the said treaty, on basis of mutually accepted strengths.'

As to proposals relative to procedure of conference Italian Government ventures to make the following observations:

5. As regards tasks which it is proposed to entrust to first commission (i.e. to discuss separately and successively all categories of warships) Italian Government desires to make it clear that its adhesion to suggested procedure must be that it was to be subject to its reservation of full liberty of judgment on the part of its delegation as regards applicability or not of system to limitation by categories.

6. As to official languages of the conference Italian Government while refraining from raising the question of principle must state that its delegation will make use also of Italian language. If there finally proves to be no official translator Italian Government will provide translator by [*sic*] its own personnel.

### No. 118

*Sir E. Howard (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson*  
(Received December 17)

No. 588 Telegraphic [A 8571/30/45]

WASHINGTON, December 16, 1929

My telegram No. 585.<sup>1</sup>

Not having heard anything further from Secretary of State I asked him today if he had no observations to make on proposed plan of procedure for naval conference. He said proposals (contained in your telegram No. 625)<sup>2</sup> seemed satisfactory as regards general lines provided always that it was understood that procedure should not be considered as finally and definitely settled until heads of all delegations had the opportunity of together discussing and approving them after arrival in London as there might perhaps be one or two slight alterations that would be useful.

The only criticism he said he felt inclined to make was that it ought to be understood that all questions of procedure should be finally settled in each case as they arise by heads of delegations and not left entirely to committee on procedure which as he understands will not necessarily include all heads of delegations among its members.

American delegation proposes to arrive on January 17 and Secretary of State wished to know if you consider this early enough for him to arrive or whether as head of delegation it would be preferable for him to arrive sooner in order to discuss such questions as above with other heads of delegations before arrival of all members of different delegations.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. This telegram reported comments by the Secretary of State on the proposed plan of procedure given to him by Sir E. Howard.

<sup>2</sup> No. 112.

<sup>3</sup> Sir E. Howard was instructed on December 20 to inform Mr. Stimson that the date suggested would be early enough and that His Majesty's Government agreed with Mr. Stimson's suggestion in paragraph two of this telegram.

*Lord Tyrrell (Paris) to Mr. A. Henderson*

*No. 1696 [A 8572/30/45]*

Sir,

PARIS, December 16, 1929

With reference to your telegrams Nos. 287 and 288<sup>1</sup> of December 9th, I have the honour to transmit to you, herewith, copies of a memorandum from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs respecting the agenda and procedure of the naval conference.

2. As I have already informed you, the French Government object to the omission from the statement of the aims of the conference as defined by you of all reference to the League of Nations and the work of the Preparatory Disarmament Commission. Probably in part for the same reason, they also deprecate the fixation of the date as proposed by you.

3. This memorandum states that a further document will be communicated shortly containing much more detailed observations on the disarmament question. In this document, as I have already warned you, the security question will be raised. I understand that in well-informed circles here it is considered likely that the Japanese Government also are likely to raise in some form the question of security at the forthcoming Conference as regards the Pacific. This means of course that the rivalry between the naval Powers is to be found in the Pacific and the Mediterranean Seas.

I have, etc.,

TYRRELL

<sup>1</sup> Nos. 113 and 112.

ENCLOSURE IN NO. 119.

PARIS, le 14 décembre, 1929

Par sa communication No. 819 du 11 de ce mois, l'Ambassade d'Angleterre a bien voulu exposer au Ministère des Affaires Étrangères comment le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté propose de définir l'objet de la prochaine Conférence Navale et d'établir la procédure de ses discussions, et elle a exprimé le désir de connaître, aussitôt que possible, la manière de voir du Gouvernement français au sujet de ces suggestions.

Le Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, en faisant savoir à l'Ambassade d'Angleterre combien le Gouvernement de la République a été sensible à la préoccupation ainsi manifestée par le Gouvernement britannique, s'empresse de lui faire part des remarques qu'appellent de sa part les propositions dont il a été saisi.

Au cas où il paraîtrait indispensable de définir à nouveau l'objet de la Conférence, au lieu de s'en tenir aux termes généraux de l'invitation du 7 octobre, le Gouvernement français considère qu'il serait nécessaire qu'ainsi que dans cette invitation, mention fût faite de la Société des Nations et des travaux préparatoires de Genève dont la réunion de Londres a d'abord pour but de faciliter les progrès.

Par ailleurs la Conférence devant chercher à se mettre d'accord sur les conditions de limitation et les possibilités de réduction des armements navals, il serait désirable de ne pas préjuger, comme paraît le faire la formule suggérée du côté britannique, des résultats auxquels aboutiront les délibérations et, par conséquent, de laisser aux futures négociations le soin de préciser notamment une date comme celle qui est mentionnée dans la Note du 11 décembre.

Le Gouvernement de la République doit d'ailleurs ajouter qu'il saisira incessamment le Gouvernement britannique d'un memorandum exposant les principes qui inspireront son action à la Conférence.

Quant à la procédure proposée, sans doute conviendrait-il de ne prendre aucune décision définitive avant la Conférence elle-même. Le Gouvernement français accepte en principe qu'après les échanges de vues préliminaires, la Conférence soit divisée en deux Commissions entre lesquelles sera réparti le travail, s'il est bien entendu par ailleurs que la deuxième Commission pourra, en cas de nécessité, en constituer de nouvelles et provoquer à tout moment opportun une ou plusieurs séances publiques sans attendre la fin des travaux de la première Commission.

Le Gouvernement de la République est d'accord pour donner à la première séance un caractère formel; cela ne doit cependant pas exclure la possibilité, pour les différentes Délégations, d'exposer publiquement à la séance suivante ou, en tous cas, avant le début des travaux de la première Commission, les principes dont elles estimeront devoir s'inspirer dans la négociation.

## No. 120

*Memorandum by Mr. Craigie on a conversation with M. Massigli*

[A 8669/30/45]

*December 18, 1929*

M. Massigli, who had come over especially from France to consult with His Majesty's Government and with the French Embassy in regard to the Naval Conference, called on me this afternoon and we had a discussion lasting about one and a half hours.

M. Massigli began by outlining the terms of the memorandum which the French Government were thinking of presenting, adding, however, that a final decision in regard to its terms would be dependent on his conversations here. The memorandum would lay down the general principles upon which the French Government would act in entering upon the Naval Conference. It would be to the following general effect:—

France's policy in regard to disarmament generally was based upon Article 8 of the Covenant of the League, and the French Government considered that disarmament should, as far as possible, be kept within the purview of the League of Nations and the League Preparatory Commission. The French Government also held the opinion that all aspects of disarmament, namely, naval, land and air, must be considered as mutually depen-

dent. Each country should be free to fix its own standard of naval needs, and they were opposed to too great insistence on ratios and yardsticks. The French Government did not feel able to accept any final commitment in regard to naval figures until the figures in regard to land and air disarmament had also been settled. There was also the question of security which had an important effect on all disarmament discussions. Further, there was the question of the 'freedom of the seas' which would have to be faced at one time or another. (Here I interjected: 'But not at the forthcoming Conference;' and M. Massigli readily agreed.) The five-Power treaty in regard to the Pacific had played a great part in bringing about a settlement at Washington in 1922. Would it not be possible to conclude a similar treaty of mutual guarantee, to be signed by all the Mediterranean Powers? M. Massigli added that this memorandum would probably be published shortly after it had been communicated to His Majesty's Government.

In reply I said I thought it right to tell M. Massigli at once that there seemed to me to be no prospect at all of His Majesty's Government being able at the present time to agree to anything in the nature of a treaty of guarantee in the Mediterranean. This was a point which he would no doubt raise in his forthcoming interviews with the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State, but I thought it right to warn him in advance that he must expect no encouragement. While I knew that they would be in full sympathy with the motives which inspired the French Government to raise this question and had every desire to help, I thought there could be little doubt that public opinion here would be unlikely to favour any further guarantee of this description in present circumstances. America was, I thought, contemplating a cautious advance in the direction of implementing the Kellogg Pact by suggesting a general treaty for 'consultation' amongst the interested Powers in the event of any Power violating the Kellogg Pact; would not a general treaty of this kind, bearing America's signature, be more valuable and more in keeping with the Kellogg Pact than any regional treaty of guarantee such as that which the French Government apparently contemplated? M. Massigli agreed that any such advance by the United States, if it materialised, would have an important bearing on the question of security.

Apart from this I did not think that we need quarrel with any of the principles which M. Massigli had enunciated, although, if the memorandum were to be published, I thought it very unfortunate that any reference should be made at this stage to the question of the 'freedom of the seas'. This was, as M. Massigli knew, a question of some delicacy as between the United States and ourselves, and I could not see what was to be gained by raising it at this particular juncture.

I then referred to the last paragraph of the recent French note<sup>1</sup> in regard to procedure at the Conference, and said I hoped the French Government would not find it necessary to persevere with their idea of making a general statement of their case at the first or second plenary meeting. I explained

<sup>1</sup> No. 119.

the reasons which had inspired us to suggest that we should all abstain from general statements of policy or any detailed exposition of statistics at one of the first meetings of the Conference. I believed that the other Governments concurred generally in this view. The procedure which we now proposed was the exact opposite of the procedure adopted at Washington in 1921, and, from this point of view alone, I thought it should be welcome to the French Government, who had never liked the Washington procedure. M. Massigli was impressed with this argument, but felt that the publication of a memorandum in the general terms he had described would be necessary, though he felt sure it would contain nothing which would be embarrassing to His Majesty's Government.

I then referred to the statements which had been current that the French delegation would not be disposed to discuss figures at all at the Conference unless figures for land and air disarmament were similarly discussed. M. Massigli replied that we need not have any fear on this score: it was true that the French Government would not be able to give any final sanction to figures in the naval sphere until the figures in the land and air spheres had been settled, but they would be prepared to discuss figures with us fully and freely.

Turning to the question of global tonnage versus limitation by categories, M. Massigli thought that the French Government would probably agree to limitation by categories, provided that there was an allowance for a transfer of tonnage between categories. He thought that the French Government would be able to agree to our proposed categories except that they did not like the limit of 1850 tons fixed for destroyer leaders as the French had some larger destroyers armed with guns of about 4-inch calibre which could not properly be included in the cruiser class. I said that if these vessels were few in number it might perhaps be possible to make some special allowance for them during the remainder of their life, and I hoped that this difficulty would not in itself prevent the fixing of the 1850 maximum limit for destroyer leaders, which was the figure provisionally agreed upon in Geneva in 1927.

As regards the form of instrument which should emerge from the Conference if agreement were reached, I found M. Massigli much less uncompromising than I had expected. He quite appreciated the necessity of signing something which could be submitted without delay to the American Senate. At the same time he said that there must be a clause which would keep the hands of the French Government free in case other naval Powers—he mentioned particularly Spain and Germany—could not agree to whatever was settled in London. It would also be necessary to make it clear that whatever we signed was not intended to take the work of disarmament out of the hands of the Preparatory Commission or the General Disarmament Conference. This was, I said, mainly a matter of finding a proper formula and M. Massigli agreed.

I said that I had given M. Cambon<sup>1</sup> a few days ago full statistical details covering every category regarding our proposals for the Naval conference,

<sup>1</sup> Counsellor at the French Embassy in London.

and I hoped that this frankness would be met by similar frankness on their part. It was clearly most desirable that we should all have an opportunity of considering each other's proposals before the Conference met. There was, of course, no reason to regard any proposal submitted at this stage as being more than tentative. M. Massigli agreed and said that directly he got back to Paris he would arrange for the French figures to be sent to us. He added that their preparations were not so advanced as ours and that it might therefore be necessary to regard anything which they sent us now as being tentative and dependent on the results of the negotiations with Italy. We then went briefly over various categories of ships, and I gathered the following:

1. *Capital ships*. No difficulty is anticipated from the French in regard to our capital ship proposals.

2. *Cruisers*. The only difficulty he mentioned was in regard to 8-inch gun cruisers as he thought that the French demand might be rather high. He said that at present France had nine 8-inch gun cruisers, built, building and projected. I replied that I understood that only six of these cruisers were under twenty years and would therefore come within the purview of the treaty if our proposals were adopted.

3. *Destroyers*. As regards destroyers, I impressed on M. Massigli that our figures must necessarily depend on the figure which was eventually decided for submarines. If submarines were to be abolished we could drastically reduce our destroyer tonnage.

4. *Submarines*. On this point I observed that any high submarine proposal by France would necessarily increase destroyer tonnages and might generally have a tendency to increase construction all round. We therefore hoped very much that, if the French Government were unable to agree to abolition, they would, at all events, be prepared to accept considerable reduction on existing programmes.

Finally, I gave M. Massigli assurances in regard to the keen desire of His Majesty's Government to work in cordial collaboration with the French Government throughout the Naval Conference. M. Massigli said that his Government had been rather shocked by what had taken place at the last Assembly when the British delegation intimated that they desired to re-open some of the matters decided by the Preparatory Commission. I replied that what had been proposed there appeared to have been widely misunderstood in France and certainly the scope of the proposals had been exaggerated. I did not believe that anything was contemplated which would prove embarrassing to France, and I expressed my personal belief that if France worked with this country now in endeavouring to make the forthcoming Conference a success there would no longer be any body of opinion in this country favourable to any course in the matter of land disarmament likely to cause serious embarrassment to France.

R. L. CRAIGIE

No. 121

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir E. Howard (Washington)*

*No. 659 Telegraphic [A 8728/30/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 20, 1929*

Your telegram No. 588.<sup>1</sup>

Please convey the following personal message orally to the Secretary of State from the Prime Minister:

'The Prime Minister thinks that in view of the difficulties which are arising in connexion with the demands of other Powers, it is becoming increasingly important that we and the United States should reach a full agreement on the cruiser question at as early a date as possible, and at all events before the Conference settles down seriously to work. He would therefore suggest that private conversations between the Secretary of State and himself in regard to this matter should be resumed on the 18th and 19th of January at the point at which they were left during the Prime Minister's visit to Washington. The Prime Minister will, of course, also be seeing the Heads of other delegations so that no difficulty is likely to arise on the score of preference being given to Anglo-American conversations'.

Please ascertain the Secretary of State's views as to this.

<sup>1</sup> No. 118.

No. 122

*Mr. A. Henderson to Lord Tyrrell (Paris)*

*No. 2743 [A 8900/30/45]*

My Lord,

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 21, 1929*

The French Ambassador called to see me on the 19th instant, bringing with him M. Massigli, who had been sent over specially by M. Briand from Paris for the purpose of explaining to His Majesty's Government M. Briand's views and those of the French Government in regard to the forthcoming Naval Conference.

M. Massigli said that M. Briand had asked him to convey a message to the effect that the French Government were sincerely anxious to co-operate with His Majesty's Government, as they attached very great importance to the success of the forthcoming Naval Conference, and knew how unfortunate it would be if it resulted in any failure.

The French Government were now preparing a memorandum which they would communicate in a few days setting out the point of view of the French Government. M. Massigli said that the point of view of the French Government could be briefly summarised as follows:—

In the discussions which had taken place at Washington between



Mr. MacDonald and President Hoover, the Peace Pact had been taken as the basis for the whole discussions. For their part the French Government were not altogether able to accept the Peace Pact as their point of departure, as the policy of France in regard to disarmament generally was based upon article 8 of the Covenant of the League, and disarmament must, as far as possible, be kept under the purview of the League of Nations and of the League Preparatory Commission. The French Government also considered that naval, land and air disarmament must be treated as a whole. So far as the forthcoming conference was concerned, the French Government could not see their way to accept any general settlement as regards naval figures pending a settlement in regard to the land and air questions. On the other hand, they perfectly appreciated that it would be desirable from the point of view of His Majesty's Government that as a result of the conference an agreement should be reached between the United States and His Majesty's Government, and M. Briand had authorised M. Massigli to say that, for M. Briand's part, he would do everything to facilitate such an agreement being reached. The French Government were further of opinion that it would be necessary to indicate in the memorandum they would communicate that the question of the freedom of the seas was involved, though they realised that it might not be possible to reach any settlement of this very complicated question as a result of the London Naval Conference. The French Ambassador explained that, as regards the memorandum to which M. Massigli had referred, it was the idea of M. Briand to communicate the document when ready to the Powers who participate in the conference, as well as to the other Powers who were involved in the general disarmament discussions at Geneva. M. de Fleuriau said that one of the principal reasons why it was necessary for the French Government to act in this manner was that it was necessary for them to expose their position in the matter of disarmament to meet the requirements of their own public opinion.

I told M. Massigli that I should be glad if he would convey to M. Briand my grateful appreciation of his message as regards the desire of the French Government to co-operate with His Majesty's Government, and that I, equally with M. Briand, attached the greatest importance to Anglo-French co-operation in the forthcoming discussions.

On the question of the memorandum which the French Government were apparently intending to circulate, I made the observation that it seemed to me a pity that it would be necessary to do this as the circulation by the French Government of a document indicating their point of view would inevitably have the effect of inducing other Governments to follow suit, with the result that every Government would take up a fixed position, a contingency which we were particularly anxious to avoid. On the question of the freedom of the seas, I said that I recognised that this question must necessarily arise out of our obligations under the Covenant of the League, but it seemed to me a pity that the French Government should consider it necessary to mention the subject, more especially as, from information we

had received, it would probably in any case be raised by the Americans.<sup>1</sup> I should altogether prefer to leave whatever initiative might be taken in this very delicate question to the Americans to decide.

Speaking generally, I said that His Majesty's Government had always recognised that the work of the forthcoming conference was not intended to achieve more than to facilitate the work of the Preparatory Committee at Geneva and eventually of the Plenary Disarmament Conference, and that I had accepted that position from the beginning. That was not to say that I did not hope that sufficiently final results would be reached in London as regards naval disarmament to have cleared this difficult question out of the way for the future discussion of land and air disarmament at the Preparatory Commission and the Disarmament Conference.

On taking their departure the French Ambassador and M. Massigli expressed their gratitude for their reception, and said that they would not fail to report to M. Briand the views I had expressed to them.

I am, &c.

ARTHUR HENDERSON

<sup>1</sup> In a letter of January 7, 1930, Lord Tyrrell was instructed that this sentence, if left unqualified, might suggest that the United States Delegation were likely to raise the question. The President of the United States and the Secretary of State had given an oral undertaking that the question would not be raised by the Delegation. In his conversation with M. Massigli Mr. Henderson had meant that the United States Government might raise the question after the Conference.

## No. 123

*Memorandum communicated by the French Ambassador on  
December 20, 1929<sup>1</sup>*

[A 8705/30/45]

### *Translation.*

When, on the 16th October, the French Government accepted the invitation of the British Government to participate in the London Naval Conference, they reserved the right to explain their points of view on the problems which will be included in the programme of subjects to be discussed, and on the whole of the questions which might arise at the conference. After the exchange of views which has already taken place, it appears to the French Government that the moment has arrived to define their attitude on the essential questions of principle and method which will arise during the negotiations. The importance of these questions, which go beyond the technical sphere, is such that they are worthy of further attention.

## I

The French Government have already taken the opportunity to express their appreciation of the motives which inspired the initiative of the British

<sup>1</sup> The text of this memorandum was published on December 26.

Government, in accord with the United States Government. They rate the essential character of the work of the limitation of armaments too highly, and they have taken too active a part in the work hitherto undertaken in that connexion, not to welcome a proposal which, as expressly stated by his Excellency Mr. Arthur Henderson in his note of the 7th October, tends to facilitate the task of the League of Nations Preparatory Commission and of the subsequent General Disarmament Conference.

Since the meeting of the Geneva Preparatory Commission held in the months of April and May last, the problem of naval disarmament must be considered as still forming an obstacle to the conclusion of the work undertaken by that commission with the effective collaboration of American delegates. Moreover, the last Assembly of the League of Nations announced that an agreement between the principal naval Powers was necessary in order to pave the way for a general agreement on the methods to be applied in the matter of the reduction of naval armaments; the conversations which were already in progress appeared to them likely to allow of the resumption and completion of the interrupted work of the Preparatory Commission and of the subsequent convocation of the general conference.

In the opinion of the French Government, therefore, it is upon the principles and methods which would render possible the ultimate conclusion of a general convention for the limitation of armaments that the Powers meeting in London must come to an agreement.

The British Government stated that they and the United States Government had taken the Paris Pact as the starting-point of their conversations. The French Government, who have already taken the opportunity to manifest with what satisfaction they welcomed this declaration, took so great a part in the preparation of that pact that it is unnecessary to state the importance which they attach to it. The Paris Pact is based upon the great force of public opinion, but its methodical application has not yet been organised; it does not determine all those questions of pacific procedure, of mutual aid against an aggressor, which the outlawing of war implies. It is true that it does constitute a real step forward from the point of view of the maintenance of peace, but it cannot be said that in its present state it is sufficient to guarantee the security of nations.

It is doubtless this consideration which has deterred the British Government from contemplating a substantial reduction of their naval armaments and the American Government from giving up the rapid execution of their last naval programme. Although both Governments were agreed that all possibility of war between them was excluded, they were obliged to consider it an essential task of their navies to ensure the protection of their communications. This would not appear to exclude the hypothesis that they might be led to intervene in a conflict arising out of the violation of solemn engagements.

Whatever importance may be attached to the Paris Pact, it is essentially on the Pact of the League of Nations that the French Government, in common with the other Governments members of the League, have undertaken to base the limitation and reduction of their armaments, of which

naval armaments form only a part. However incomplete may be the measures hitherto taken to ensure its operation, the League Pact provides the foundations of a complete system of security based upon the application of methods of pacific settlement and of assistance to a State unjustly attacked; it is only by reason of the external assistance on which they can rely that the nations will be in a position effectively to reduce their armaments. A technical general agreement regarding armaments must therefore presuppose a political agreement; and, in particular, a complete naval agreement must presuppose an agreement on the question of the freedom of the seas defining the rights of belligerents and of neutrals and providing for the possible collaboration of other fleets against that of an aggressor country.

However much they regret this situation, the French Government have none the less decided to lend all their support to the Powers meeting in London in order to find a solution in accordance with the possibilities of the moment.

The question of method is no less important. Following the example of the Washington Conference, the United States and British Governments appear to have contemplated the adoption of a method of evaluation of naval armaments which takes into account only the armaments of the five fleets numerically the strongest, and which is based on mathematical calculations.

The Rome Naval Conference,<sup>1</sup> however, furnishes an example that the principles of the Washington Treaty were no longer applicable when, in 1924, the League of Nations attempted to extend them to all navies; and it has often been shown at Geneva that mathematical calculations would not allow the rational application, valid for all States, of the principles defined in article 8 of the Pact, which provides for a general reduction of armaments compatible with the security of each State and with the international obligations which might be imposed on it by common action, taking into account the geographical situation of the State and its special conditions.

The conference will only completely attain its object if it renders possible at Geneva a general agreement on the methods of limitation of naval armaments.

## II

These general observations were necessary in order to define the principles by which the French Government will be guided during the course of the negotiations in London.

1. It is upon article 8 of the Pact that the French Government, faithful to their signature, propose to base the reduction of their armaments. It is, indeed, on this basis alone, which does not require the application *à priori* of mathematical formulæ and upon which the Preparatory Disarmament Commission has already based its work, that, in the opinion of the French Government, an agreement can be drawn up which will be acceptable to the Governments not represented at the London Conference.

<sup>1</sup> This conference, which was held in February, 1924, was primarily a meeting of members of the Naval Sub-Commission of the Permanent Advisory Commission of the League for Military, Naval and Air Questions. Naval experts of States not members of the League but possessing capital ships were also invited.

Within the limits of article 8 two different methods for the limitation of naval armaments have been urged at Geneva; one by global tonnage, and the other by categories of ships. The strongest navies were inclined towards the second method, whilst the others all pronounced themselves in favour of the former.

Anxious to reconcile these opposing points of view, the French delegation, in April 1927, proposed a transactional system which was favourably received by all the navies which will now be represented at London, and which was viewed with sympathy by many others. In particular, the American Government have twice announced publicly that they were disposed to accept it as the basis for discussion. This system consisted in effecting the limitation of navies by global tonnage, stating the distribution of the tonnage amongst the principal categories of ships and regulating the transfer of tonnage from one class to another.

Such a system, being susceptible of modifications in detail, could so much the more be adapted to the necessities of any agreement between the American and British Governments, since it leaves to any States which may so desire every facility to make a stricter agreement between themselves. In spite of their preference for the system of limitation by global tonnage, the French Government are prepared to support this transactional method if it would bring about a general agreement.

2. The preparatory work at Geneva has shown that there is a close interdependence between the various defensive armaments of a country, that is to say, between its land, sea and air forces. The French Government have on many occasions declared that this is a fundamental principle of their policy of national defence, the importance of which is particularly due to the geographical situation of France, which is at one and the same time a continental and a maritime Power, and the mother country of a colonial empire scattered over the whole surface of the globe.

The French Government do not desire to find themselves compelled to raise in London questions relative to the fixation of land and air armaments, but they cannot allow the fact to be ignored that the tonnage needed to meet their naval defence requirements is in close proportion to the level of their land and air armaments, calculated according to the methods laid down by the Preparatory Commission at their last meeting. If the latter's decisions were to be called in question, any particulars the French Government may give in regard to their naval armaments would lose all value.

The French Government are anxious to add, however, that these difficulties will not prevent them from seeking solutions which will allow Powers who so desire and who consider that they can do so with full security, to make definitive agreements between themselves without waiting for the conclusion of the general convention for the limitation of all armaments.

3. In the light of the foregoing remarks, the French delegation will have no difficulty in showing the extent of the tonnage required to meet their national needs, taking into account the geographical situation of France on three seas and the development of a colonial empire of 11 million square

kilometres, peopled by 60 million inhabitants, and with a commerce amounting to 32 milliards. The existence of this empire, the obligation of ensuring the adequate defence of the great groups constituting it, the many ties, political and economic, which bind these great groups to one another and to the mother country, the necessity for protecting the integrity and the economic life of France itself, the duty of safeguarding the security of more than 30,000 kilometres of coast, all these obligations create duties for the French navy of which the French Government cannot lose sight when the question of their applying article 8 of the Pact arises. The French naval budget, however, is smaller than it was in 1913; France will continue to be inspired by the same regard for strict moderation in the appraisal of her needs and the computation of the forces necessary to meet those needs.

In this connexion, the French Government will set the highest value upon any guarantees of security which might be established and which would give full effect to the engagements of international solidarity against an aggressor, as described in article 16 of the Pact of the League of Nations.

4. Moreover, bearing in mind the happy influence exercised by the treaty relative to the Pacific on the conclusion of Washington naval agreements, it appears to the French Government that, in a limited sphere, but one which interests the majority of European navies, progress could be realised. Communications across the Mediterranean have an importance for the British Empire which the French Government do not fail to recognise. They are of no less importance to France. Is it possible for the Mediterranean naval Powers to conclude an agreement of mutual guarantee and non-aggression with which those Powers not represented at London might be associated, in particular a Power such as Spain, the importance of whose naval interests in the Mediterranean it is unnecessary to recall? The French Government, in asking this question, declare themselves favourable to the principle of such an agreement, being animated by a sincere desire to bring about a reduction of naval armaments.

In concluding this statement of general observations which have been suggested to them by a study of the agenda of the conference, the French Government hasten to state that none of the difficulties to which they have deemed it their duty to call attention appears to them to be insurmountable.

Convinced that all the Governments meeting in London will, during the conversations, be animated by the same goodwill as they themselves in endeavouring by sincere collaboration to find the means to triumph over obstacles, the French Government are confident of the success of negotiations which will prepare the way for the general conference on the limitation and reduction of armaments by which alone it appears possible to give satisfaction to the common will of the peoples to organise peace.

*Sir J. Tilley (Tokyo) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received December 21)*  
*No. 262 Telegraphic [A 8721/30/45]*

TOKYO, December 21, 1929

Your telegram No. 214.<sup>1</sup>

Japanese Government offer the following observations on agenda and procedure:—British Government propose to define aim of conference as being ‘to attain agreement on reduction of existing naval strength and programmes and on limitation of war vessels on basis of mutually accepted strength’. Having regard to communication of British Government dated October 7 stating that conference is intended ‘to consider categories not covered by Washington Treaty and to arrange and deal with the question covered by second paragraph of article 21 of that treaty’, Japanese Government understand it to be implied in proposals now made by the British Government for definition of aim of conference—(a) that arrangement that conference is to seek to attain for ‘reduction of existing naval strength and programmes’, as mentioned in memorandum under review is to include all categories of ships, whether covered or not covered by Washington treaty; (b) that with regard to categories covered by Washington treaty the same basis of limitation as is laid down in that treaty shall continue to govern any arrangement which may be reached at London conference with a view to further reduction and limitation of armaments; and (c) that with regard to categories not covered by Washington treaty a new basis of reduction and limitation is to be agreed upon at London conference.

3. British Government suggest date by which agreed equilibrium is to be reached should be December 31, 1936. It is presumed that proposed date is relative only to categories not covered by Washington treaty. Japanese Government welcome suggestion as a basis of discussion but they would prefer to reserve definite decision on date until the whole plan affecting naval strengths of the several Powers shall have been made more fully known.

4. Referring to suggestion of British Government respecting duration of period within which basis of agreed strength is to continue in force, Japanese Government are of the opinion that question might be conveniently left for conference to examine.

5. Japanese Government highly appreciate elaborate care taken by British Government in working out agenda and procedure to be followed at the conference. It is hoped that British Government will arrange with Japanese delegates upon their arrival in London as to such agenda and procedure.

6. Subject to observations set forth above Japanese Government are happy to concur in proposals embodied in memorandum of British Embassy.

<sup>1</sup> No. 112.

## No. 125

*Sir E. Howard (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson*  
(Received December 23)

No. 601 Telegraphic [A 8729/30/45]

WASHINGTON, December 22, 1929

Your telegrams Nos. 657,<sup>1</sup> 658,<sup>2</sup> and 659.<sup>3</sup>

I informed Secretary of State yesterday:

1. That you thought January 17 would be early enough for him to arrive. He said that his ship might arrive on January 16.

2. That you agree that nothing should be definitely settled as to procedure till all heads of delegations had met and approved. He expressed satisfaction at this.

3. That there should be only four public entertainments as you mentioned and that speeches should be kept down to a minimum. He expressed satisfaction but again begged he might not be expected to speak more than once as public speaking was a real burden to him.

4. I told him in strict confidence about action already taken to avoid possibility of repetition of appointment as delegate of a Dominion Government of a British naval expert. He was gratified to learn this.

5. I finally mentioned Prime Minister's desire, for reasons given in your telegram No. 659, to have preliminary conversations on January 18 and 19 with Secretary of State before the conference opens. He entirely agreed with this.

He seemed much gratified by all these messages.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. This telegram dealt mainly with the question of entertainments during the conference.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed. This telegram contained the reply summarised in No. 118, note 3.

<sup>3</sup> No. 121.

## No. 126

*Lord Tyrrell (Paris) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received December 28)*

No. 1748 [A 8870/30/45]

Sir,

PARIS, December 27, 1929

With reference to my letter to Sir R. Lindsay of the 22nd December,<sup>1</sup> I have the honour to inform you that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to-day showed me in confidence the memoranda exchanged between the French and Italian Governments respecting the naval question and gave me the following oral explanations respecting this correspondence:

2. As already reported in my despatch No. 1552 of the 16th November,<sup>1</sup> the Italian Ambassador in Paris proposed a Franco-Italian discussion of the naval question on the 15th October. On the 17th October his Excellency

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.



was informed that the French Government were not yet ready to enter into a technical discussion of this question, but that they would be happy to listen to any proposals which the Italian Government might have to make. No proposals were forthcoming, and, on the 30th October, the French Government enquired orally as to the reason for this. On the 15th November the French Government were still without any proposal. On that date a written communication was addressed to the Italian Ambassador in Paris enquiring when the Italian Government proposed to make the communication on which the Franco-Italian discussions could begin.

3. On the 19th November (as reported in Mr. Wigram's letter to Sir R. Lindsay of the 20th November<sup>1</sup>, and in Mr. Campbell's letter to Mr. Craigie of the 6th December<sup>1</sup>) the Italian Ambassador communicated a memorandum containing the long-awaited proposal. The memorandum stated that Italy would accept as a maximum figure for her total tonnage ('chiffre global') any figure proposed provided that it was not surpassed by the maximum allotted to any other continental Power. 'France,' said the Italian memorandum, 'may take what maximum she pleases. We ask for the same maximum as her without being obliged to say whether or not we will build up to that figure, or at what date we will build up to it.' If the French Government would accept this proposal, Italy 'would be ready to examine the other aspects of the question, taking account of the French point of view.'

4. On the 4th December (as stated in Mr. Campbell's letter to Mr. Craigie of the 6th December<sup>1</sup>) M. Briand communicated to the Italian Ambassador a memorandum containing his reply to the Italian memorandum of the 19th November. This memorandum stated that the French Government based its naval requirements on the needs of France and the French dominions overseas. The French requirements might be diminished if some pact could be concluded within the framework of the Covenant of the League of Nations, and such as 'to increase the security guarantees of which the Mediterranean naval Powers disposed.' The kind of treaty suggested was a 'convention of non-aggression and of mutual guarantee.' Secondly, the French memorandum stated that the French Government noted that the Italian Government were opposed to any hierarchy of naval Powers and that, to meet this scruple, they were prepared to establish the tonnage allocation of the naval Powers in two columns. The first column would contain the maximum figure allotted to each Power and would be 'the same for all the navies.' The second column would contain the figure up to which each navy intended to build during a term of years. 'Thirdly, the memorandum stated that, while the French Government favoured a 'chiffre global,' they were ready to work at the conference on the basis of the transactional formula submitted by them in 1927. Fourthly, the French Government were opposed to the suppression of the submarine—an important defensive arm for the smaller fleets. Fifthly, they intended to maintain the principle of the interdependence of naval with military and air disarmament, and to

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

insist on the ultimate authority of the League of Nations in the whole matter. If the Italian Government agreed with these general principles, the French Government would be happy to elaborate with them a common programme for submission to the London Conference.

5. On the 21st December a second Italian memorandum was received in Paris. This memorandum agreed with the French view that naval requirements should be based on needs. It stated also that 'it is reasons corresponding in general to those expressed in the French memorandum which inspire the Italian Government in the conversations in progress with the French Government *for the conclusion of a treaty of arbitration and friendship and for the settlement of the questions pending between the two countries. A pact of arbitration and friendship between Italy and France, of which the Italian Government would be happy to see the conclusion in the near future, could, moreover, be considered as the first important and concrete step towards the conclusion of wider and general agreements.*' Secondly, the Italian memorandum continued to insist on parity, and 'leaves the French Government to fix the figure, reserving to Italy the right to build up to the figure thus fixed if and when it considers it necessary.' Thirdly, the Italian Government declare themselves, like the French, in favour of a 'chiffre global,' though they would not refuse, at need, to consider 'a more rigid system.' Fourthly, the question of the submarine is still the subject of technical study, but 'in principle the Italian Government are not opposed to its abolition.' Fifthly, the Italian Government favour the principle of the interdependence of naval with military and air disarmament, and they 'continue to think that the entry into force of a naval convention which, unlike the Washington Treaty, would limit every type of war vessel must be subordinated both to the eventual adherence of the minor naval Powers and to the conclusion of an agreement on the limitation of military and air armaments.'

6. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs are disturbed by the continued insistence of the Italian Government on the principle of parity. But I am assured that the French Government do not intend to break off the conversations on this account, and that in their reply, which is now under consideration by the competent Ministers, they will propose that the discussion of principles should now cease and that a discussion of actualities and of details should take its place. Thus the Italian Government will be invited in particular to say what figures they propose for the different categories of vessels. I am also given to understand (as indicated in my letter to Sir Ronald Lindsay of the 22nd December) that the French Government are worried by the passage in the memorandum which refers to the general Franco-Italian negotiations. They think they see in the relevant sentences of the memorandum (quoted textually above) an attempt to barter concessions in the naval sphere against concessions in the general negotiations. This they do not intend to permit, and will reply that they cannot make one negotiation dependent upon the other—time is not available. They will add that, in their opinion, the conclusion of a Mediterranean Pact will improve the atmosphere for the conclusion of the general negotiations.

7. As regards the general negotiations, I was informed this morning, as indeed we already know, that they concern exclusively African questions. I reminded the Ministry for Foreign Affairs that we had heard little of substance of these negotiations since the receipt of the documents communicated by the French Ambassador in London on the 22nd January, 1929. We knew that an Italian reply had been made to these proposals in July. Beyond that we at this Embassy knew nothing. I was informed that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs were now preparing a short note for our information, in which the progress of these negotiations to date would be explained. This would be communicated within the next day or two, and I was given to understand that a French reply to the Italian communication of July last was now under consideration. On my expressing the hope that the information which was now about to be supplied to us would be complete, I was again told that the general negotiations, though concerning a pact of arbitration and friendship, really centred round the African difficulties. The Balkans had nothing to do with the matter, though M. Mussolini had at some time during the last year told M. de Beaumarchais orally that, were French support withdrawn from Yugoslavia, his negotiations would come to a satisfactory end almost at once. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs said that they knew that an exactly similar hint had been conveyed to the Yugoslav Government, and that the latter had been told that if they would 'lâcher la France' their negotiations also would be concluded with surprising speed. I was told that these sort of demands were impossible. All that the French had done was to conclude a treaty with Yugoslavia in 1927, after the Italians had concluded their treaty. Since then the Italian treaty had lapsed, and the Italian Government, though free to renew it, were refusing to do so. The talk of machinations of French armament firms in Yugoslavia was all very well, but until the Italian intentions were clearer it was not surprising that the Yugoslavs should arm. Certainly they bought some of their arms in France, but in this friendly conversation it might be pointed out that of the four Yugoslav submarines two came from France and two from England, and that the soundings for the loans which the Yugoslav Government were now trying to secure abroad were being taken first in London and not in Paris. France, in this matter, should not be condemned too easily on evidence, much of which was founded on hearsay and some on deliberate Italian design.

8. I understand that the above communication, in so far as it relates to the Naval Conference (paragraph 2 to paragraph 6), is also being made to the United States Government. I trust that you will find it adequate. Should this not be the case on any point, and should the information, when we eventually receive it, respecting the general negotiations not be sufficient, I should be glad to be informed. I think that in the present excellent and intimate state of my relations with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs it would not be impossible for me to supplement it.

I have, &c.

TYRRELL

No. 127

*Mr. Henderson to Sir E. Howard (Washington)*

*No. 683 Telegraphic [A 8915/8915/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 29, 1929*

In a memorandum presented on December 20 the French Government, in laying down the principles by which it will be guided at the Naval Conference, draw attention to the happy influence exerted by the treaty relating to the Pacific concluded as a result of the Washington Conference, and suggest that it might be possible to draw up a treaty of non-aggression in which the Mediterranean Powers, including those who will not be represented at the London Naval Conference, might participate.

His Majesty's Government are not disposed to enter into a regional treaty of guarantee of this description but they appreciate the motives which have inspired the French Government and they would welcome any step (short of a commitment to intervene in a dispute) which would add to the sense of security of the Mediterranean Powers.

As your Excellency is aware, the Prime Minister and Mr. Hoover discussed informally the possibilities of further steps being taken, by international agreement, for the peaceful and orderly settlement of international disputes, without, however, having reached any definite conclusion. Since then there have been reports in the American papers that the United States may propose at the Naval Conference some extension to other parts of the world of the principle of 'consultation' between the signatory Powers which is contained in Articles I and II of the Four-Power treaty relating to the Pacific. We are unaware whether this report has any foundation in fact but it is clear that, taken on the initiative of the United States, any such step would exercise a beneficial influence on the course of the Naval Conference.

We do not think that this question can usefully be discussed by letter and cable at this juncture; but, provided that Mr. Stimson sees no objection and that further enquiries here encourage His Majesty's Government to believe that such a step would be helpful, the Prime Minister proposes to resume with him as soon as he arrives the private conversations on this subject which took place between the President and the Prime Minister at Washington.

Please read this telegram privately and confidentially to the Secretary of State so that, if he agrees in principle, he may be prepared to discuss the matter with us in London.

No. 128

*Memorandum communicated by the Spanish Ambassador*

*[A 9006/8915/45]*

*(Translation.)*

SPANISH EMBASSY, LONDON, *December 30, 1929*

Everyone is aware of the pacific tendency by which, interpreting the feeling of the Spanish nation, the Spanish Government are actuated in their

efforts to contribute, both by acts and by conscious abstention from acts, to any movement that may conduce to ensuring world peace.

Faithful to this line of conduct, the Spanish Government are following, with all interest and sympathy, the labours directed to disarmament and, in their capacity as a member of the League of Nations, have taken part and are still desirous of taking part in the work which, under the auspices of the League, it is hoped will some day provide a solution for this difficult and complicated problem, the general character of which demands the collaboration of all nations.

Considering that the negotiations conducted between certain States at Washington and to be continued in London regarding partial aspects of the question of disarmament may be productive of solutions which will facilitate the success of the League's work, the Spanish Government have refrained from any direct attempt to take part in the conversations referred to. The generic nature of the problem, the complexity of the factors which compose the same, and its truly universal character as affecting all civilised States, should permit the Spanish Government to expect that the matter would once more become the object of the deliberations of the organs of the League of Nations where a favourable opportunity must be afforded to that Government to protect, as they are obliged to do, the legitimate interests of Spain in relation to the other nations and in particular to the general peace problem.

From impressions recently gathered it may seemingly be inferred that at the meeting arranged for the 21st January, 1930, by the Governments of the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan for the purpose of examining the problem of naval disarmament, another matter of an entirely different character may be touched on, viz., the Mediterranean problem. If disarmament affects all nations and is a matter within the competence of the League of Nations, the Mediterranean problem concerns only a group of countries and has not hitherto been referred to the Geneva body.

The Spanish Government, who have refrained, so long as the proposed London Conference appeared to be devoted exclusively to preparatory work for the solution of the disarmament problem, from any manifestation on their own account, are obliged to state that they could only regard with profound displeasure the discussion, in their absence, at the said conference or elsewhere, of the Mediterranean problem in any of its aspects. They are confident that if the other States directly interested in that concrete problem wish to raise the matter, they will not do so without relying from the outset, and as a matter of the highest importance, on the collaboration of the Spanish Government; of that the good and cordial friendship which unites Spain to all of them is the pledge.

*Lord Tyrrell (Paris) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received December 31)*

*No. 187 [A 8918/30/45]*

PARIS, December 30, 1929

My telegram No. 186 of December 29.<sup>1</sup>

I am informed by an absolutely reliable American source that it is not correct as rumoured in Paris yesterday that the United States Ambassador's conversation with the President of the Council will necessarily be followed by other discussions.

2. I am told by the same source that at the conversation of December 28 M. Tardieu showed great anxiety that the London Conference should reach no final decision on the naval question and that more prominence should be given to the connection of the conference with article 8 of the Covenant. M. Tardieu suggested to Mr. Edge<sup>2</sup> that French scruples on this point might be met by some statement—made, I gather, at the opening of the conference—that it was summoned in view of the numerous efforts which had lately been made in the direction of naval disarmament, viz. article 8 of the Covenant, the Washington Conference, the work of the Geneva Preparatory Commission and the Briand-Kellogg Pact. M. Tardieu was very insistent that reference to the Briand-Kellogg Pact was not enough.

3. M. Tardieu also explained to Mr. Edge the difficulties arising out of the Italian demand for parity. He suggested—and I hear that both Mr. Edge and Mr. Gibson who was present considered this most important—that the duration of any agreement into which the Powers might enter at London, should coincide with that entered into at Washington, viz. both agreements should expire in 1936. M. Tardieu seemed to think that such an arrangement would ease French difficulties *vis-à-vis* Italy. The French Government could concede parity to Italy for a short period during which period the Italians would not have time to build up to the French strength. From what was said by my American informant, I gather M. Tardieu gave the impression that an agreement of relatively short duration might also ease the French scruples about regarding any agreement concluded outside the League as final. For it could be stated that the agreement was only for six or seven years before the end of which the Geneva disarmament conference would complete its labours.

4. I understand that M. Tardieu told Mr. Edge that French opinion was still very anxious lest the treatment accorded to France at Washington in 1921 should be repeated. He also said that French opinion was afraid that the London Conference might be intended by the American Government as a means by which it would disinterest itself in the future proceedings of the Preparatory Disarmament Commission. Further, M. Tardieu stated

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. This telegram reported that the discussions referred to in paragraph two were taking place.

<sup>2</sup> United States Ambassador at Paris.

that French opinion was still not entirely convinced that the British Prime Minister's visit to Washington had not been designed to impose some Anglo-American decision on Europe. The incidents at the first Hague Conference had unfortunately given ground for the view that some important change in British policy was under consideration, and Lord Cecil's statement at Geneva respecting trained reserves concession had been noted in this connexion. M. Tardieu had seemed particularly sore about the latter point, and had stated that if concessions made in April could be withdrawn in the autumn, the value of all agreements would be seriously diminished.

5. I understand that M. Tardieu expressed some anxiety as to the attitude of his naval experts in London and that he advised Mr. Edge to beg his Government to do everything they could to prevent expert intervention in the discussions. In particular, he was afraid of the use that was likely to be made by the French naval experts of the recent German cruiser construction.

### No. 130

*Sir E. Howard (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson*  
(Received January 1)

*No. 619 Telegraphic [A 8/8/45]*

WASHINGTON, December 31, 1929

Your telegram No. 683.<sup>1</sup>

I read this telegram to Secretary of State this morning as directed and he replied that he would be very glad to enter into this question as well as others connected with Conference with Prime Minister on January 17 when he hopes to have his first meeting as his ship is now sailing from New York twenty-four hours earlier so as to reach England on the evening of January 16. There was one point in your telegram, however, to which he could not subscribe, that was where it states that extension to Mediterranean of Pacific four-Power treaty provision for consultation of signatory Powers 'taken on initiative of the United States' would be beneficial. He said that I was aware how suspicious certain elements in Senate were of any even indirect implication that United States might be entangled in European conflicts and it would never do for United States Government to initiate any such proposal which would at once be seized on by critics in Congress in order to undermine the whole work of Conference. I asked him whether supposing initiative were taken by another Power the United States would be willing to join in such an arrangement on the ground of new axiom, born of Kellogg Pact, that all Powers are directly interested in maintenance of peace in all parts of the world. He said that this axiom if generally accepted should be incorporated into Kellogg Pact itself and not be in any way a part of or depend on naval disarmament agreement. It certainly would constitute an advance in international law for maintenance of peace which he

<sup>1</sup> No. 127.

hoped might come in good time but we must advance step by step and it seemed to him that extension of Pacific treaty principle to the Mediterranean would be one step in advance which might perhaps ultimately be extended to cover the world and include all signatories of Kellogg Pact but time was not yet ripe for that. There was also a difficulty about any general treaty of this kind which was that of arranging quickly for a conference of representatives of so many Powers.

Speaking of French and Italian attitude with reference to Mediterranean question Secretary of State said that he thought he understood and sympathised with both countries since security of passage in Mediterranean for the French from North to South and for Italians from East to West was of vital importance. Any arrangement therefore which tended to allay fears of these two Powers would have goodwill of United States Government but latter could not, in view of public opinion here, go further and take any direct share in an arrangement dealing with a region in which United States had no immediate interest.

### No. 131

*Minute by Sir R. Lindsay on a conversation with the Spanish Ambassador*  
[A 9006/8915/45]

January 1, 1930

The Spanish Ambassador called today and, with reference to his communication of the 30th. instant<sup>1</sup> regarding the contingent request of his Government to be invited to the Naval Conference, stated that he had been instructed by telegram to make the following points:—

(1) It was not the intention of his Government themselves to raise the question of the Mediterranean.

(2) The Spanish Government does not ask for an invitation to the Conference if it is quite certain that the Mediterranean question will not arise; if, on the other hand, the question does come into discussion, then his Government would not only claim, but claim insistently, an invitation to participate in those discussions.

(3) There can be no reason for surprise at the attitude of the Spanish Government, which is doing no more than watching its interests in a problem of capital importance to the country.

(4) The action of the Spanish Government in the present matter is entirely independent and taken without consultation with any other Power. This statement is made in special connexion with the report printed in the *Sunday Express* to the effect that there was some secret understanding between the Spanish and Italian Governments.

R. C. L.

<sup>1</sup> This date should read 'December 30'.



*Mr. A. Henderson to Lord Tyrrell (Paris)**No. 34 [A 8572/30/45]*

My Lord,

*January 3, 1930*

With reference to your despatch No. 1696 of December 16th<sup>1</sup> last regarding the agenda and procedure of the London Naval Conference, I observe with satisfaction that the French Government agree in principle with the procedure proposed but desire that no definite decision on the subject should be taken until the Conference meets; and further, that they wish it understood that the second committee should be empowered to appoint sub-committees and to call if necessary one or more plenary meetings without waiting for the close of the proceedings of the first committee. With these views I concur and I should be glad if you would so inform the French Government.

2. As regards the suggestion that the second plenary meeting should be utilised for public statements of principles, I hope that Your Lordship will be able to dissuade M. Tardieu from embarking on any general declarations of this description. Such declarations necessarily provoke counter declarations by other Powers and the proceedings at once assume—particularly to the outside world—that appearance of rigidity which it is our purpose if possible to avoid. I understand that the other participating Governments are in general agreement with the above and would be prepared to abstain from any general declarations of policy at the outset. The position of the French Government having been clearly explained in the memorandum communicated to His Majesty's Government on the 20th December and subsequently published, I feel the more hopeful that the French Delegation will be prepared to conform to what appears to be the general wish of the other participating Powers. This matter of the opening statements will be discussed with other matters relating to procedure at an informal meeting between Heads of Delegations which the Prime Minister proposes to summon in the morning of Monday the 20th instant. In the meanwhile, however, I should be glad if you will take any action you consider feasible and desirable in order to dissuade the French Government from making any further declarations on principles and policy. It may perhaps be worth pointing out to them that the procedure we propose for the coming Conference is the exact opposite of the procedure of formal declarations, and omnibus proposals followed at the Washington Conference of 1922, to which we understood the French Government took such exception at the time.

I would add that replies having now been received from all the Governments concerned to the proposals made by His Majesty's Government on agenda and procedure, these will be summarised in a single document for distribution to the French, Italian, Japanese and United States Governments as soon as possible.

I am, etc.,

ARTHUR HENDERSON

<sup>1</sup> No. 119.

*Sir E. Howard (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received January 3)*  
*No. 2386 [A 72/1/45]*

Sir,

WASHINGTON, *December 27, 1929*

I have the honour to transmit to you, herewith, copy of a memorandum,<sup>1</sup> dated the 26th December, respecting a conversation between the chairman of the American delegation and the chairman of the Japanese delegation on the London Naval Conference.

I have, &c.

(For the Ambassador),

RONALD CAMPBELL

ENCLOSURE IN No. 133

*Memorandum*

During the stay in Washington of the Japanese delegates to the London Naval Conference, they attended two meetings with the American delegates to the conference, on Tuesday, the 17th December, and Thursday, the 19th December, 1929, respectively.

At these meetings the chairman of the Japanese delegation, the Hon. Reijiro Wakatsuki, and the chairman of the American delegation, the Hon. Henry L. Stimson, presented their points of view on certain questions affecting Japan and the United States.

Mr. Wakatsuki, after emphasising Japan's great desire for the success of the London Conference and an actual reduction of naval armaments, explained that Japan had always made it the fundamental principle of her national armament to hold such strength as would not disturb the sense of national security of her people. In other words, a strength insufficient for attack and adequate for defence. Japan desired to obtain agreement from all Powers concerned to her having a ratio of 70 per cent. of the largest naval strength, as being that necessary for defence purposes in the adjacent waters of Japan. Mr. Wakatsuki said that he understood that the Secretary of State had proposed to Ambassador Debuchi to contrive to find some means of solving this question by taking into consideration the actual conditions. He then asked for information upon which to construct such a plan. He desired particularly to be informed as to the details regarding the provisional understanding between the United States and the British Government in regard to large-sized cruisers.

Mr. Stimson replied to express his great desire for the success of the London Conference, and to set forth his views frankly.

On the question of 10,000-ton cruisers, he said there existed no agreement except what he had told Ambassador Debuchi some time ago. The American Government demanded twenty-one such cruisers on the recommendation

<sup>1</sup> Copies of this memorandum was also given by the United States Government to the French and Italian Governments.

of its naval advisers, while the British Government thought that the United States should be satisfied with eighteen ships. The American Government thought that that was near enough to an agreement to enable the two countries to go to London with every hope of success. The difference of three ships could somehow be adjusted. However, as yet, he had no figures of adjustment.

As to the larger ratio suggested by Mr. Wakatsuki, he said he would reply, giving the result of his careful thought after his consultation with his colleagues and his survey of the minds of the people. He considered the Government ought to represent such opinion as the people would think just and right.

Mr. Stimson then referred to the Washington Conference, which brought about the situation that led to the convening of the conference at London. He said the American people felt that this country had been very generous and made great sacrifices in order that an agreement might be reached. America, in 1921, had the largest navy programme in the world, but was ready to give up that position, and, moreover, to pledge herself to maintain the *status quo* of the fortification in the Philippine Islands and her other Pacific possessions in order to facilitate disarmament by removing the sense of rivalry, jealousy and competition, and particularly to relieve Japan of any anxiety as to her national security. He referred to the improved good feelings between America and Japan resulting from the successful outcome of the Washington Conference. The American people believed in good faith that that agreement could only have been reached by the United States giving up a very large portion of her naval strength and consenting to the maintenance of the *status quo* of fortifications in her possession in the vicinity of Japan.

Mr. Stimson commented on the regrettable renewal in the last seven or eight years of competition of naval construction in the classes of ships not covered by the Washington treaties. There was, therefore, a feeling that that conference had not altogether been a success. America had not been party to that competition in the beginning, but after the failure of the Geneva Conference felt constrained to take to naval building once again, as was shown by the Acts of Congress authorising the construction of twenty-three 10,000-ton cruisers. The last Act was peremptory, which meant that the President must build unless some international agreement as to disarmament could be arrived at. Moreover, the American navy had formulated a big plan involving an enormous expenditure to build the other classes of ships that might be necessary to complete the American fleet. He explained that in order to show the importance which the American people attached to the necessity of catching up with the navies of the other Powers unless some agreement of disarmament could be concluded.

Such being the case, when asked by Mr. Debuchi as to the opinion of the United States in regard to the desire of Japan to hold a higher ratio in cruisers than in capital ships, he had replied frankly that that would give a bad impression to the American people and would not conduce to the

success of the conference. A great many Americans would feel such a change to be unfair to themselves.

The American people, the Secretary continued, strongly felt that battleships were the centre of naval strength. They had never considered a battleship fleet as obsolete. However, the United States was willing to try to find a way to reduce the strength of that class. He knew, also, that that was Japan's wish. The United States, however, would not feel it in her interest if Japan reduced the battleship fleet, in which the ratio of 5 : 5 : 3 had already been agreed upon, and turned the moneys thus saved to the building of cruisers, in which Japan was asking for a ratio of 10 : 10 : 7. The United States did not seek to impose a position of inferiority on any nation. He had told Ambassador Debuchi, therefore, that they would rather discuss matters at the conference, giving careful consideration to the actual conditions of the situation, without referring to the question of ratio. He hoped that a basis for an understanding or agreement might be found in the light of what Japan had actually been doing in regard to her cruiser strength.

He had, therefore, been very disappointed to learn that Japan had recently increased her proposed cruiser strength from 206,000 tons to 226,000 tons. He would rather make the subject of discussion the actual strength of 206,000 tons than any figures calculated merely on account of the ratio. He could not but feel that the American people would regard the high figures with serious misgivings, and that as a result it might demand a corresponding increase in the American cruiser programme.

So his opinion had been that if Japan would keep her needs down to the actual existing strength, America would be willing to try to meet her on the same principle and to persuade other nations to come to an agreement. Great Britain had already shown her willingness to reduce her cruiser strength lower than what she proposed in 1927, and if the latter came down, America would go down even further. All he could promise now was to give the utmost sympathy and fair consideration to the Japanese claim.

Mr. Wakatsuki was gratified that Mr. Stimson was willing to give sympathetic consideration to the Japanese attitude. The Japanese people had a feeling that they had been pressed to accept the form of disarmament stipulated at the time of the Washington Conference. Without criticising the results of that conference, he mentioned that Japan had claimed from the beginning a ratio of 70 per cent., and the people deeply regretted that that claim had not been accepted. The Government explanation of the benefit of maintaining the *status quo* of fortification in the Pacific had conciliated some portion of the people, but the general feeling of regret had not been wiped away. Public opinion favoured 70 per cent. being put forward strongly at a further disarmament conference for the class of ships not covered by the Washington Conference. This had been a national conviction. He pointed out that Japan had agreed also to maintain the *status quo* of fortifications of her own islands. Japan had also made sacrifices by scrapping warships. At anything short of 70 per cent., Japan's sense of national security would be disturbed. He had no idea of reopening the 5 : 5 : 3

ratio agreed upon at the Washington Conference as to capital ships. However, as to other categories of ships not covered by the Washington Conference no agreement whatever had been completed at that conference. It had only been agreed upon that the size of cruisers should be limited to 10,000 tons, a size which did not exist at that time. Subsequently, a number of cruisers of 10,000 tons had gradually come into existence, developments had been effected in other instruments of war, and the general situation had been greatly changed since the time the Washington treaties were concluded. Therefore, he thought, it would not be adequate to make the ratio of the Washington treaties the basis upon which to argue disarmament to-day.

As to capital ships, Japan had never thought that they were obsolete. They still constituted the centre of armament. Japan thought that, in order to meet the necessity of naval reduction, it would be advisable to prolong the age, reduce the size, lengthen the period of replacements, and so on, of this class of warships. It was the Japanese feeling that it was not Japan alone that would profit by it, but all nations concerned at the same time. Japan had no thought of utilising the moneys saved by reducing the capital ship strength for augmenting the cruiser tonnage. This he was saying, not just on the spur of the moment, but he believed that it was the conviction of the Japanese people.

He would not object to studying the matter as Mr. Stimson had suggested from the point of view of actual conditions and without reference to the question of ratio. However, he was given to understand that between the United States and Great Britain the principle of parity had first been decided upon, and the concrete figures taken into consideration as an application of that principle. Japan had proposed to have an agreement on the ratio first, in the sense that some standard had better be adopted as in the case of the Anglo-American arrangement. He thought that it would not be inadvisable to approach actual conditions and concrete figures, keeping the ratio always in mind. Later, he would be glad to submit for Mr. Stimson's consideration a plan conceived in that sense.

Mr. Wakatsuki referred to Mr. Stimson's disappointment in regard to the figures of 206,000 tons and 226,000 tons, which Japan now proposed as cruiser strength.

The difference of 20,000 tons was calculated on the basis of the 70 per cent. ratio. Therefore, this suppositive tonnage might come down as tonnage to be held by the superior navies would come down. The figures stood high simply because the superior navies seemed to claim high figures. Mr. Wakatsuki said, in reply to an enquiry from Mr. Stimson, that he would submit his plan for consideration. If America were going to hold eighteen 8-inch gun 10,000-ton cruisers, Japan would desire to possess a certain number of 10,000-ton cruisers and a certain number of cruisers of less than 10,000 tons, aggregating 126,000 tons, distributed among thirteen ships. This represented the eventual figures, but, in the transitory period pending the replacements of the *Furutaka* class cruisers, Japan desired to hold fourteen

ships, consisting of the eight 10,000-ton cruisers, four *Furutaka* class cruisers with 7,100 tons each and two more ships with a tonnage of less than 10,000 tons. This he considered very much inferior to a fleet consisting of cruisers with a uniform tonnage of 10,000 tons.

Mr. Wakatsuki referred to submarines, and their adequacy as weapons of defence for a country like Japan, consisting of islands widely scattered on the sea and holding an inferior naval strength. Japan would be content to hold nothing more than her present strength of 78,500 tons. She would have no objection if other Powers held ten-sevenths of her submarine strength.

With regard to small cruisers and destroyers, Japan stood ready to effect reduction according as the other Powers concerned decreased their holdings.

Mr. Stimson thought that it might be preferable not to discuss only the question of 10,000-ton cruisers, but to take other categories of ships into consideration at the same time. He felt that if the discussion centred on 10,000-ton cruisers alone it would be quite difficult to arrive at an agreement satisfactory to the American people. It could not but feel that the amount of 226,000 tons meant that Japan desired an increase of her naval strength on one hand and demanded a reduction of American naval strength on the other.

At this point the meeting adjourned to the 19th December.

Mr. Stimson referred to the good feeling existing between Japan and the United States largely as a result of the confidence which had been set up after the Washington Conference, and said that this knowledge made him enter this conference anxious that nothing would change or diminish this feeling.

He thought that the figures relating to Japanese naval strength mentioned by Mr. Wakatsuki would cause anxiety in the American public mind. The President, who is seeking reduction, would be most disappointed. The President and all those who are also in touch with public opinion realise that the American people would feel that this country, with its immensely long coastline on two oceans, separated by the Isthmus of Panama, would normally require a much larger defensive force than a nation situated like Japan in a compact group of islands.

Mr. Stimson said he hoped that they would be able at the conference to find a way by which the national feeling of the Japanese people could be protected and their national sensibilities not in any way offended by anything like an attempt to impose upon them or put them in a position of inferiority to other nations.

After again stating that the American people and Congress would regard a cruiser tonnage of 226,000 tons for Japan as so high that it would necessitate counter-building on the part of America, Mr. Stimson referred to the matter of submarines. He said that the American Government is very strongly opposed to the use of submarines for destroying commerce, and was very glad that it was joined by Japan in the Washington Conference Treaty (unfortunately not ratified by all of the other nations), which forbade their use indiscriminately for destroying commerce.

Mr. Stimson said he felt that the danger of too great a reliance on submarines, and too large a construction of submarines, the uses of which are comparatively limited apart from commerce destroying, is that it creates a temptation to use them against merchant ships under conditions where they cannot obey the rules of war. He recognised that other nations might differ in their opinion as to the usefulness of submarines in warfare, but hoped that at least the construction of submarines might be restricted so as to avoid their use against merchant commerce in the inhuman manner which had been used in the past. Mr. Stimson said that he hoped that this conference might successfully reaffirm the humane principles of the 1922 treaty on the subject of commerce-destroying submarines.

Mr. Stimson feared that the nearly 80,000 tons of submarines suggested for Japan by Mr. Wakatsuki would be thought by the American people to be unduly high, and he feared that such large construction might tend to lessen the good feeling of which he had already spoken, and might excite a demand in America for the construction of a large force of anti-submarine craft like destroyers and light cruisers. Mr. Wakatsuki, in reply, said that the Japanese people have in mind only the maintenance of national security, and therefore it had never entered their mind that the Japanese navy might ever excite the mistrust of other Powers. He again said that cruiser tonnage is a relative question, and that, if other Powers came down in their strength, Japanese figures would naturally decrease. He also said that Japan would be most willing to conclude a treaty at the forthcoming conference such as the kind referred to in the treaty of 1922 forbidding illegal use of submarines.

Mr. Wakatsuki, with reference to the use of submarines as a weapon of defence, suggested that, if both Governments consulted experts in the matter, it would eventually become very much clearer.

Mr. Stimson and Mr. Wakatsuki both expressed their gratification of the very friendly and frank nature of the conversations, and considered that a very considerable progress had been made in the direction of a mutual understanding.

WASHINGTON, *December 26, 1929.*

No. 134

*Mr. A. Henderson to Lord Tyrrell (Paris)*

*No. 70 [A 260/8/45]*

My Lord,

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 8, 1930*

The French Ambassador called to see me at the Foreign Office to-day. He said he had brought down with him a collection of documents relating to the French fleet, which he intended to hand over to Mr. Craigie.

I told the French Ambassador that I had just received a visit from the Spanish Ambassador, who had informed me that he had received instructions from his Government to the effect that, if there were any question of a discussion of an agreement relating to the Mediterranean at the forthcoming

Naval Conference, the Spanish Government must insist that they should be invited to participate from the first, and that they would regard it as an unfriendly act if any attempt were made to exclude them. I understood from M. Merry del Val that a similar communication had been made to the French and Italian Governments.<sup>1</sup>

M. de Fleuriau said that a communication on the subject had certainly been made to M. Briand by the Spanish Ambassador in Paris, but he did not gather that it was of the same categorical nature as the communication made to me by M. Merry del Val. I understood from M. de Fleuriau that M. Briand had informed Señor Quiñones de León that he would carefully consider the point of view of the Spanish Government and had left his reply at that.

I am, &c.

ARTHUR HENDERSON

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Henderson told the Spanish Ambassador that a reply was being prepared to his communication of December 30 and that no question regarding a Mediterranean agreement was on the agenda of the Conference.

### No. 135

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received January 10)*  
*No. 2 Telegraphic [A 335/1/45]*

Your despatch No. 18.<sup>1</sup>

ROME, *January 10, 1930*

I learn that in view of definite French refusal of Italian request for parity, conversations on naval disarmament between France and Italy have been broken off and will not be renewed before the Conference.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

### No. 136

*Memorandum communicated to the French Ambassador<sup>1</sup>*  
*[A 8705/30/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 10, 1929*

His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have given the most careful consideration to the memorandum communicated to them on the 20th December last,<sup>2</sup> in which the French Government explain their views upon various questions connected with the forthcoming London Naval Conference. His Majesty's Government much appreciate the frank and friendly attitude of the French Government in furnishing them with so comprehensive an elucidation of their point of view, and in reiterating their assurance that they are determined to make the conference successful.

<sup>1</sup> This memorandum was published in the press on January 13.

<sup>2</sup> No. 123.



In issuing their invitation to the London Conference, His Majesty's Government considered that it would not conduce to the success of the conference if the various Governments were to entrench themselves, before the conference opened, in positions—based, perhaps, on misunderstandings—from which they could not recede; nor in the invitation did His Majesty's Government refer to obligations contracted under the Covenant, or to questions of national security and such considerations, because they are clearly inherent in all disarmament negotiations and must be in the mind of every nation taking part in this conference. One of the great advantages of the frequent meetings at Geneva is that Governments have opportunities to understand each other's respective positions and problems, and His Majesty's Government felt that it was unnecessary to recite elementary obligations, internal and external, but rather to concentrate upon the supremely important problems which have to be faced. The considerations set out in such a friendly spirit in the French memorandum will, of course, be in the minds of all the delegates.

It is true that there may not yet have been devised a complete machinery of sanctions to enforce the various peace agreements now in existence; but in the meantime much has been done, and His Majesty's Government place considerable trust in the fact that fifty-six countries have declared their intention to renounce war as an instrument of national policy and to resort only to pacific means for the settlement of international disputes. Unless a beginning in the reduction of naval armament is held to be justified by the measure of security already achieved through the Covenant of the League of Nations, the Quadruple Treaty relating to the Pacific, the Treaties of Locarno, the signature of the optional clause of the Statute of the Permanent Court of International Justice by thirty-three countries, and, finally, the Treaty for the Renunciation of War, public expectation will be disappointed, the tendency towards an expansion in arms, which is only too evident already, will develop, and the nations will be taught once more in practice to trust only to military preparations for their security. His Majesty's Government earnestly hope that the nations attending the London Conference may, by agreement on reduced naval strengths, register their confidence in the great advance made since the war in the provision of national security by political agreement.

His Majesty's Government observe with interest the distinction drawn in the French memorandum between the Pact of Paris and the Covenant of the League. They would suggest, however, that the two documents may also be regarded as complementary one of another. From this standpoint the Pact of Paris, by its renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy, may be held by the States which are members of the League of Nations to have completed the structure of peace which the more restricted language of the Covenant had for the time left unfinished. His Majesty's Government accept fully and unreservedly all the obligations of the Covenant, which, however, must not be held to involve a delay in progressive steps for disarmament, for which the Pact of Paris is a justification.

His Majesty's Government note the suggestion of the French Government that it is doubtless due to the absence from the Kellogg Pact of any provisions for its methodical application that they have been deterred from contemplating any considerable reduction in their naval establishment. His Majesty's Government desire to remove the error upon which this observation rests. In response to the better prospects of peace and of an international agreement the British proposals, as a matter of fact, provide for a very considerable reduction in the strength which the British Empire has considered necessary in all categories of combatant vessels from capital ships to submarines.

In Part II, section 1, of their memorandum the French Government refer to the system of limitation of naval armaments by 'global tonnage'. His Majesty's Government have consistently expressed their preference for dealing with the problem of naval disarmament by a strict limitation of the types, tonnages and guns of all categories of warships, since they feel confident that any other method of limitation must tend to preserve those elements of competition and uncertainty which it will be one of the express objects of the conference to eliminate. The problem of naval armaments involves not only the amount of tonnage, but the use to which it is put. Nevertheless, His Majesty's Government have studied with great care the 'transactional proposal' to which the French Government refer, and are ready to discuss the possibility of some arrangement based upon that proposal.

The French Government emphasise in Part II, section 2, of their memorandum that there is a close interdependence between the various defensive armaments of a country and give the reasons why they regard this as a fundamental principle of their policy of national defence. His Majesty's Government agree that the problems of naval, land and air disarmament cannot be completely dissociated one from another, but they do not take the view that no attempt should be made to deal with one unless all are being dealt with simultaneously. His Majesty's Government consider that the approach to disarmament can best be facilitated by attacking the problem in detail as is now proposed at the Naval Conference. In the end a complete disarmament agreement must cover the whole field of arms, and steady and continuous work will be required until that field has been covered. They therefore join the French Government in earnestly hoping that the conference will result in an agreement which will commend itself to all the Powers represented on the Preparatory Commission, and, by facilitating the task of that body, hasten the summoning of a general disarmament conference.

As regards Part II, section 3, of the memorandum, His Majesty's Government note with satisfaction that the French Government, while taking due account of the naval requirements imposed by France's geographical position, will, like His Majesty's Government, continue to observe strict moderation in the appraisal of their needs, and that the French delegation will have no difficulty in indicating the extent of the tonnage required to meet the needs of their country.

His Majesty's Government have learnt with interest the views of the French Government regarding the desirability of a treaty of mutual guarantee and

non-aggression between the Mediterranean Powers. They agree that the Four-Power Treaty relating to the Pacific, which resulted from the Washington Conference, exerted a happy influence upon the negotiation of the Washington Naval Treaty. His Majesty's Government would only point out at this stage that a treaty such as that suggested by the French Government appears to go considerably further than the Pacific treaty above mentioned, which provided only for the summoning of a conference for the settlement of controversies and for joint consultation in the face of aggressive action. Inasmuch as all the Mediterranean Powers are members of the League of Nations, it would appear that facilities already exist for joint consultation in the event of need. There is a great measure of security in this, but His Majesty's Government would be glad to exchange views on the subject with all the Powers concerned.

In conclusion, His Majesty's Government note with particular pleasure the opinion expressed by the French Government that none of the problems mentioned in their memorandum amount to irremovable obstacles, and they share entirely the confidence felt by the French Government that there will be cordial co-operation amongst the delegations to promote the great aims of the conference, and that success will terminate their labours.

#### No. 137

*Note by Lord Tyrrell of a conversation between Mr. A. Henderson and  
M. Briand*

[A 353/1/45]

PARIS, January 11, 1930

Mr. Henderson went to see M. Briand this morning before his departure for Geneva.

2. The Secretary of State began by enquiring as to the progress of The Hague negotiations and was assured by M. Briand that a satisfactory result could be expected within the next four or five days. In his opinion the Germans had only raised matters of secondary importance and the real difficulty lay with Dr. Schacht who had now been summoned to The Hague. It had struck M. Briand very much how weak and impotent the German Ministers felt as regards Dr. Schacht.

3. As regards the forthcoming Naval Conference, M. Briand expressed himself optimistically and he repeated over and over again that all the Governments entering into the Conference should enter it with a firm determination to make a success of it because it was simply impossible to contemplate failure. Failure would deal a very serious blow to the cause of disarmament and one from which it might take the world a good many years to recover. He assured Mr. Henderson that he and his colleagues were determined to make a success of this meeting and he thought that they could make contributions that would ensure success.

4. He said that there were only two things which seriously preoccupied public opinion in France. One essential was that a very close link should be

maintained between the Naval Conference in London and the Preparatory Disarmament Commission in Geneva. This should not preclude a definite arrangement being made in London provided it remained subject to reference and ratification at Geneva. M. Briand mentioned this no doubt in order to meet the American requirements, i.e., they wished to take something definite home for submission to the Senate.

5. Another cause of disturbance to public opinion in this country was the position that Italy took up in the Mediterranean, which had at times been very much emphasised by the violent pronouncements of M. Mussolini. The French Government were bound to take public opinion here under this head into account. They had tried to meet Italian aspirations by proposing a year and a half ago a treaty of friendship and arbitration. In addition they had met Italian wishes in Tripoli, in Tunis and in Morocco but after a year and a half of negotiations the Italians had put forward such extravagant demands in Tripoli as no French Government could satisfy. When the French Ambassador in Rome had taxed M. Mussolini with the extravagance of these demands, M. Mussolini's reply was that they had been forced upon him by his departmental officials.

6. M. Briand said that this demand rather discouraged him in his efforts to conciliate Italy but he would nevertheless persist. For this purpose he proposed the conclusion of a Mediterranean agreement on the lines of the Pacific pact of 1921, but he emphasised to Mr. Henderson that its character would be one excluding sanctions such as are found in the Locarno agreement and only entailing mutual consultation in the event of disturbances.

7. M. Briand's idea was that this pact should include Spain, Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia and France. He added that the adherence of England would immensely strengthen the influence of such a pact and help to dispose of the rivalry between Italy and France in that sea, but he did not consider our adherence necessary, though most desirable.

8. In this connection Mr. Henderson mentioned to M. Briand the application put forward by Spain for permission to attend the Conference and both he and M. Briand agreed in the answer which His Majesty's Government proposed to return to the Spanish request.

9. M. Briand also agreed with Mr. Henderson that the question of a Mediterranean pact need not figure on the agenda of the forthcoming Conference, nor that it was desirable that any Government should take up at the start of the Conference a rigid attitude from which it could not retreat.

10. He much preferred the method of constant personal contact and private conversations on all the political aspects of the Naval Conference, with a view to achieve such agreement between the parties as would enable them when meeting in conference to register decisions already privately arrived at.

11. Mr. Henderson heartily concurred in these views and assured M. Briand that not only he but also the Prime Minister would very much favour such a procedure in the treatment of the political questions connected with naval disarmament.

*Lord Tyrrell (Paris) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received January 16)*  
*No. 8 Telegraphic [A 450/1/45]*

PARIS, *January 15, 1930*

My despatch No. 1748 of December 27.<sup>1</sup>

2. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs have given me the following details of the French reply of January 3 to the Italian memorandum of December 21 respecting the naval question.

3. The French reply begins by taking note of the points on which France and Italy are in agreement, viz.:

- (a) Inter-dependence of naval with military and air disarmament;
- (b) No final and definite limitation of naval armaments until the intentions of the Powers not represented in London are known;
- (c) Limitation by total tonnage without excluding the 'transactional' solution proposed by the French Government.

4. The memorandum continues that France and Italy are not in agreement on the following points:—

- (a) The Italian proposal to subordinate the conclusion of a Mediterranean pact to the satisfactory conclusion of the general Franco-Italian negotiations;
- (b) The French Government consider that such a Mediterranean pact would facilitate the naval negotiations;
- (c) The French Government consider that such a pact would be in conformity with the recommendations of the League of Nations and would render possible 'des reductions de tonnage'.
- (d) The necessities of the geographical distribution of the French fleet are such as to render parity with Italy too abstract a formula for requirements which differ widely;
- (e) The Franco-Italian conversation ought to be pursued not on the basis of abstract principles but on that of the consideration of concrete problems.

5. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs do not expect any further discussion with the Italian Government before the Conference meets.

6. They have once more emphasised to me the complete and detailed information which they have given me both on the Franco-Italian naval and general negotiations (see my despatches Nos. 1748 of December 27 and 3 of January 1<sup>2</sup>). I am again informed that in this matter the French Government have absolutely nothing to conceal and that their policy is one of peace and is open to the world. They do not attempt to hide their point of view that the Italian attitude inevitably leads to the supposition that Italy is not content with the existing settlement and that this is a disquieting factor.

7. I have been asked to tell you that it is considered here that His Majesty's Government have in the last resort a profound and weighty influence with

<sup>1</sup> No. 126.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed.

Italy. In these circumstances it is hoped here that at the London Conference the influence of His Majesty's Government will be used to show Italy that she must modify her attitude and do nothing to render more difficult a settlement on which so much depends.

### No. 139

*Lord Tyrrell (Paris) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received January 16)*  
*No. 9 Telegraphic [A 451/1/45]*

PARIS, January 15, 1930

During the last few weeks I have reported my impressions respecting French policy at the forthcoming Naval Conference in numerous telegrams, despatches and private letters. On the eve of the Conference I will now summarise these impressions. I do so with all the more assurance as I have recently had opportunities of discussing the French attitude at the Conference in separate private and friendly conversations with four of the five French delegates (MM. Tardieu, Briand, Leygues and Piétri), the two assistant delegates (MM. Moysset and Massigli) and four of the seven parliamentary delegates.

(1) The decisions of the Conference must be subject to some kind of final confirmation by the General Disarmament Conference to be summoned by the League of Nations. This reservation means that France will not unreservedly and indefinitely commit herself at London without any assurance as to the treatment reserved for Germany and for certain of the Allies of France by the General Disarmament Conference.

(2) The Marseilles-Algiers crossing is in war a French internal mobilisation line, i.e. the Rhine frontier is partly defended with African troops. No settlement must for this reason prevent France from being able, with full allowance for her commitments in other seas, to concentrate in the Mediterranean a force sufficient, principally against Italy, to put the defence of this crossing beyond doubt.

(3) A Mediterranean pact will not diminish the necessity of the assurance of the Marseilles-Algiers crossing, but it will diminish the threat to it and will therefore lower the margin of safety in ships on which France will otherwise insist. France will apparently be content with some treaty after the Pacific model. The very fact that such a treaty will in reality have little practical value, in view of the provisions of the Covenant and of the Kellogg Pact, seems to make it easier to give the French the satisfaction required which is really desired to throw dust in the eyes of their public. I cannot too strongly emphasise the importance of giving the French this satisfaction as a 'beau geste' and without any bargaining. Such a gesture will certainly be repaid.

(4) France does not require a battle fleet unless Italy should maintain one and the new German cruisers should develop into a powerful fighting unit.

(5) France requires submarines for defence against battle fleets, possibly

also against the superior cruiser strength of certain Powers and possibly also against the greater potential naval strength constituted by certain merchant marines. Conversely, were there no battle fleets and some more binding system of security in force, correspondingly fewer submarines would be required.

2. In conclusion I venture once again to emphasise the extreme importance of playing upon the note of Anglo-French co-operation as well as of taking the French into your confidence and of maintaining *continuous and personal contact not merely amongst the heads but throughout the delegations*. This cannot be overdone. The French are supremely anxious to secure a settlement with you. The problem with them is really a psychological one and should, I venture to submit, be largely treated as such in the forthcoming negotiations.

## No. 140

### *Memorandum communicated to the Spanish Ambassador*

[A 498/8/45]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 17, 1930*

His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have read with great interest the memorandum<sup>1</sup> which the Spanish Ambassador was good enough to communicate to the Foreign Office on the 30th ultimo in regard to the forthcoming London Naval Conference.

His Majesty's Government desire at once to assure the Spanish Government of the correctness of their assumption that the questions of naval disarmament which will engage the attention of the London Conference will, in due course, come up again for discussion at the Preparatory Commission of the League of Nations on Disarmament, where the Spanish Government, like other Governments interested, will have ample opportunity for expressing their views upon them. Indeed, the purpose of the London Naval Conference is to facilitate the task of the Preparatory Commission and of the subsequent General Disarmament Conference by securing, if possible, a preliminary agreement on certain points between the five naval Powers which participated in the Washington Conference of 1921-22.

The memorandum communicated by the Spanish Ambassador also refers to the question of concluding a political agreement relating to what the memorandum describes as the 'Mediterranean problem.' This question does not appear on the agenda of the Naval Conference which it is desired to limit, as far as possible to naval questions only, though it is referred to amongst other matters in a general memorandum which His Majesty's Government have recently received from the French Government. It is hardly necessary to add that no formal deliberations and certainly no decisions in regard to a political problem of such importance could take place without full consultation with all the Mediterranean Powers concerned.

<sup>1</sup> No. 128.

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received January 28)*

*No. 67 [A 754/1/45]*

Sir,

BERLIN, *January 24, 1930*

German opinion is following the London Naval Conference with keen interest, and though there is evidence of some disappointment that Germany has not been asked to participate, it is probable that official circles, as will be seen later, are prepared to claim that Germany's exclusion is proof positive that Germany has disarmed completely. Different sections of German opinion are interested for different reasons. The largest section, that is to say, moderate German opinion, which includes the Left and part of the Centre, is genuinely interested in any step which may lead to a general limitation of armaments. It is, of course, a permanent German grievance that the preface to Part V of the Treaty of Versailles, whereby Germany undertook to disarm 'in order to render possible the initiation of a general limitation of the armaments of all nations', remains—to quote the Centre organ 'Germania'—a scrap of paper ten years after the ratification of the treaty and the virtual disarmament of Germany.

2. Another section of opinion, though not necessarily committed to rearmament, adopts the standpoint that so long as the Danzig Corridor exists communication with East Prussia must be kept open by sea at all costs, and that, therefore, Germany must take the fullest advantage of the naval clauses of the Treaty of Versailles and maintain her naval forces, such as they are, at the highest pitch of efficiency. That this section of opinion is not the least influential is clear from the controversy which took place last year regarding the construction of cruiser 'A',<sup>1</sup> a controversy which ended in their favour.

3. Finally, there is the noisiest and smallest section of opinion which would welcome anything likely to restore Germany's material power on land or sea. If capital ships and cruisers are restricted as a result of the London Conference to anything approximating to the limits imposed on German ships of the same class by the Treaty of Versailles, then the small German armoured ships become, in the opinion of this section, relatively more powerful. These champions of a strong navy are only concerned with the Baltic, and with the possibility of a general<sup>2</sup> attack on Poland, in which case the German fleet would complete the blockade of Poland from the sea.

4. Apart from these interests the political parties in Germany have

<sup>1</sup> The reference here is to the first of the so-called 'pocket battleships' laid down by Germany. This ship was within the 10,000-ton limit laid down in the Treaty of Versailles for ships of the German navy, but was superior in armament and armour (though not in speed) to any of the 10,000-ton 8-inch gun cruisers built, building or projected by other naval Powers. On June 18, 1929, the Reichstag, in spite of considerable opposition, had voted the sum of RM. 11,620,000 towards the construction of the ship. The ship was referred to as *Panzerschiff A* or as the *Ersatz-Preussen*. See also below, No. 343.

<sup>2</sup> This word appears to be a mistake for 'German'.



a general interest in the political developments which may result from the conference. There is a widespread feeling that the Labour Government in England, by coming to terms with the United States on the naval question, are paving the way for closer co-operation between Great Britain and the United States. Such co-operation might, it is argued, reduce the League of Nations to a secondary position, a consummation from which wide circles of German opinion would not be averse. In the choice of London as the seat for the conference, newspapers of the Right profess to see a definite indication of an Anglo-American understanding which would eventually leave France and her followers isolated at Geneva. It is argued that both Great Britain and the United States, after prolonged experience of the Geneva atmosphere, have decided that France and her vassals exert so much influence within the League that in all vital questions of policy recourse must be had to direct negotiation.

5. The official attitude of the German Government to the conference has not yet been stated, but the '*Diplomatische Politische Korrespondenz*' was evidently expressing an official view in its issue of the 23rd January, when it wrote as follows:—

'Apart from the efforts for a naval understanding, the conference offers an opportunity for the discussion of the greatest political problems of the world in the direct presence of the United States, which is not a member of the League of Nations. The discussion is taking place in London, and America is directly represented not by observers or specialists but by politicians and diplomatists as well. That the possibilities are fully realised is clear from the proposals to discuss such questions as a Mediterranean Pact, a Channel Pact, the application of the Kellogg Pact, &c. Germany's interest, apart from any direct interest that she may have in France's attempt to focus discussion on her new armoured cruiser 'A,' lies in the fundamental importance of all efforts to disarm. The German standpoint is that measures for the reduction of armaments of all kinds, no matter in what order or within what period such disarmament is to be effected, are to be welcomed. Germany can stand aside during this discussion as a benevolent and sympathetic onlooker. Germany has not been summoned because her disarmament has long since been effected to a very radical extent. And the controversy regarding her future armoured ship 'A' can hardly have any other object than the provision of a suitable excuse for France to retire out of the line at a given moment. Inasmuch as France would be manœuvring herself into a very unfavourable political situation were she to block concrete disarmament proposals deliberately, we can await the progress of the game and the crystallisation of concrete proposals with great interest.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The remainder (not printed) of the despatch contains more extracts from the German press.

## CHAPTER III

# The London Naval Conference, January 21–April 22, 1930

### INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THE documents in the Foreign Office archives relating to the London Naval Conference fill five large folio volumes, together with several smaller volumes. The greater part of this material is technical in character.

The reports of the plenary sessions of the Conference, the six reports of the First Committee of the Conference, statements of policy issued on behalf of His Majesty's Government, and the Governments of France, Italy, Japan, and the United States, and the text of the London Naval Treaty were published by His Majesty's Government in *Documents of the London Naval Conference, 1930*.<sup>1</sup>

The documents printed below in this chapter are intended to supplement the non-technical material already published. They include diplomatic correspondence and records of meetings of Heads of Delegations and of other conversations, and deal primarily (i) with the efforts of His Majesty's Government to secure agreement between France and Italy, and (ii) with the negotiations resulting in agreement between Great Britain, Japan, and the United States.

It will be seen, therefore, that the chapter is limited, as far as possible, to negotiations of a general political character and must not be regarded as giving a complete account, on the technical side, of the business of the London Conference.

<sup>1</sup> The British statement of policy was first published on February 7, 1930, as Cmd. 3485. For convenience it is reprinted as the first document in this chapter. The text of the treaty is also reprinted as Appendix I to this volume.

### No. 142

#### *Memorandum on the position at the London Naval Conference, 1930, of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom*

#### PART I

1. The policy of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom is to keep the highway of the seas open for trade and communication, and, in relation to the political state of the world, to take what steps are necessary to secure this.

2. The Government is directing its policy to secure this by co-operating with the League of Nations, making friendly compacts with other nations,

strengthening the International Court, accepting arbitration in international disputes, honouring the Peace Pact of Paris, and otherwise aiding in tranquillising the world. Whilst it believes that the result of that policy will be ultimately to eliminate the causes of war and establish peace on an unassailable foundation, it recognises that there must be a time of transition which will be marked by a steady decline in the importance and amount of armaments of all kinds, ending in disarmament.

3. The transition time should be marked by efforts to carry the security against war afforded by political and judicial agreements further and further and to mark progress by disarmament treaties.

For this reason the Government considers the London Naval Conference of supreme importance, and believes that it ought to put an end finally to competition in naval armaments and reduce existing fleets and building programmes.

4. In estimating what fleet is required the Government has also to take account of the obligations which the country has undertaken in consequence of the terms of the Covenant of the League of Nations (partly offset, though they are, by the pooled security afforded under the Covenant by its provision of mutual support), and other commitments which it has inherited and which it has to fulfil in relation to the present condition of the world. In deciding what these amount to in terms of naval strength, the Government must estimate the chances of war breaking out because, if this is not done, fleets will be built which will never be of any use, but which will threaten rather than protect and at best will be a waste of national resources.

5. The Government takes the view that, if the strengths of national fleets are not to be a menace, they must be the subject of international agreements, the purpose of which should be to maintain an equilibrium. This equilibrium will not be secured by mere numerical equality in ships and tonnage—which may indeed be a condition of serious inequality from the point of view of effectiveness—but by agreed programmes which will be based on considerations of requirements affecting dispersion, etc., and in which menace will be reduced as much as possible. For this, there can be no general formula or ratio. It must be the subject of agreements made from time to time at Conferences such as this.

6. As the political conditions determining world security are not fixed, agreements should be made for periods at the end of which they should be reviewed and during which Governments should be engaged in strengthening the foundations of peace.

7. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom proposes that the general agreement should run till 1936, and that in 1935 a further conference should be called to review the situation in relation to world conditions. Governments will be asked, at the present Conference, to agree to make all adjustments necessary in their programmes and existing strengths by a date to be fixed before the end of 1936, and it will be suggested that the Conference in 1935 should deal with the situation after 1936.

## PART II

With these considerations and aims in mind His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom makes the following proposals for the consideration of the Conference:

(1) It believes that an agreement should not only be upon total fleet tonnage (global tonnage), but upon the size of individual ships in the various recognised fleet categories and the amount of tonnage which nations use in each of the categories. The categories should be those in general use amongst naval Powers to-day: capital ships, aircraft carriers, cruisers, destroyers and submarines.

An agreement by categories is essential to obtain certain conditions of security, such as the elimination of competitive building and the maintenance of the equilibrium between national fleet and national fleet. It is not only the gross tonnage of a fleet which counts, but the use to which the tons are put, and an agreement on the latter is required.

(2) At the same time, whilst an agreement upon category totals is essential to establish the feeling of security, it might be convenient if a percentage of tonnage assigned to different categories of certain types of vessels might be allowed to be transferred to certain other types, but His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom does not favour a general transfer. For the classes of capital ships, aircraft carriers and submarines there should be no transfer. Within the cruiser category it is proposed that transfer should be permitted out of the 8-inch class into the 6-inch class on a percentage to be arranged, an agreed evaluating factor being employed for such transfer. The object of this arrangement is to take account of the special needs of countries requiring a larger proportion of cruisers of a small type.

(3) As regards small cruisers and destroyers, it is probable that some nations with smaller navies may find a rigid division into these categories unworkable. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom will be prepared to consider a transfer of tonnage between these categories to take account of the special needs of the Powers in question.

(4) Turning to the question of the size and number of capital ships, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom proposes that the limit of numbers fixed by the Washington Treaty should be reached within eighteen months of the ratification of the Treaty arrived at by the London Naval Conference instead of in 1936; that no replacement of existing ships should take place before the next Conference in 1935, and that, in the meantime, the whole question of capital ships, their number, size and gun calibre, should be the subject of negotiation between the Powers which have built them. Without disturbing the Washington equilibrium and, therefore, security, the Government will press for reduction. The British Admiralty have informed the Government that it would favour a reduction in the size from 35,000 tons to 25,000 tons and of guns from 16-inch to 12-inch, together with a lengthening of the age from twenty to twenty-six years. The Government invites an exchange of views upon this subject before the Con-

ference disperses. As regards no other category of ships is there a better opportunity of meeting peace requirements or of effecting economies.

In the opinion of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom the battleship, in view of its tremendous size and cost, is of doubtful utility and the Government would wish to see an agreement by which the battleship would in due time disappear altogether from the fleets of the world.

(5) His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom considers that the evolution of the aircraft carrier both in tonnage and in calibre of guns should be limited, and that ships of 10,000 tons and under should be included in the total tonnage assigned to the class. The Government proposes a total tonnage of, say, 100,000 for the British and United States navies as compared with a total tonnage of 135,000 under the Washington Treaty, and an adjustment of that assigned to other nations on the Washington Treaty ratios; that the maximum size should not exceed 25,000 tons and the age be lengthened from twenty to twenty-six years.

(6) The conversations of last summer between the Governments of the United States and Great Britain turned almost exclusively upon cruisers, and underlying them was the assumption that these should be grouped in one category subdivided into those carrying 8-inch guns and those carrying 6-inch guns and under. The negotiations were further conducted on the assumption that the requirements of the British Commonwealth would consist of fifty cruisers with a total tonnage of 339,000. A final arrangement will depend on the decisions of this Conference as regards limitation in size of units. The Government proposes that a general agreement should not change the tonnage limit of 8-inch cruisers provided for in the Washington Treaty, but fix that of the smaller vessels at about 6,000 or 7,000 tons, with a further agreement that only a fixed proportion of the ships in that class should be built up to that limit. It also proposes to fix the life of cruisers at twenty years.

(7) The size and total tonnage of the destroyer class must largely depend on the size and tonnage of the submarine class. The Government proposes that the limit of size should be for leaders 1,850 tons with 5-inch guns (maximum) and 1,500 tons for destroyers, also with 5-inch guns (maximum). Its present building programme will ultimately consume 200,000 tons, but this can be reduced if the submarine programmes of other Powers are similarly reduced.

(8) His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom proposes the abolition of the submarine. The argument that this arm is one solely of defence has been destroyed by the experiences of the late War. In war conditions it is an arm of attack, carrying offence into new fields and extending war fronts. If an agreement upon this is impossible, the Government will put forward proposals limiting submarines rigidly to defence requirements in numbers and size. Its position during the negotiations on this arm will be to obtain the lowest possible limits. It will also propose to revive the agreement signed at Washington on the 6th February, 1922, but not fully ratified by the signatory Powers, to regulate the attack of merchant

ships by submarines in accordance with the rules and practice set forth in the treaty.

(9) Below this there will be types of auxiliary vessels, used for purposes ancillary to fleets which do not strictly speaking enter into fleet strengths. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom proposes that they should be specified and that each Government should agree to publish each year lists of such vessels with their individual tonnage in commission or actually building.

*London, February 7, 1930.*

### No. 143

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir E. Howard (Washington)*

*No. 94 Telegraphic [A 1126/1/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 11, 1930*

Your telegram No. 55 (of February 9. Naval Disarmament).<sup>1</sup>

One of the unforeseen results of the limitation of cruiser tonnage to 10,000 at the Washington Conference was the tendency of every Power to build units towards the maximum size permitted under the treaty. The object of the proposal put forward *for consideration* is to prevent similar action in the event of 6-inch gun cruisers being limited to six or seven thousand tons by enabling the Powers, so far as possible, to reserve their present proportions between the 5,000-ton type of 6-inch vessel and the 7,000-ton type.

You can assure any enquirers that there is nothing in this suggestion which is likely adversely to affect any United States interest.

Repeated to Tokyo No. 25.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. This telegram referred to the passage in the British memorandum of February 7 that there should be a tonnage limit for smaller cruisers of about 6,000 to 7,000 tons, but that only a fixed proportion in the latter class should be built up to that limit.

### No. 144

*Note by Mr. Craigie of a Conversation with M. Massigli*

*February 13, 1930*

I had a long interview with M. Massigli this morning in regard to the French figures.

I made it quite clear to M. Massigli that the figures presented to us were far too high:<sup>1</sup> the French appeared to be going into the Conference on a basis

<sup>1</sup> On February 12 the French delegation circulated to the other delegations a statement of the French requirements. The text of this statement and of a communication made to the press on February 13 is printed in *Documents of the London Naval Conference, 1930*, pp. 515-22. The French proposals envisaged, for December 1936, a fleet including ten 8-inch gun 10,000-ton cruisers, together with 24,850 tonnage of older cruisers carrying guns above

of a steady expansion of their naval power: we, on the contrary, were going in on the basis of as large a reduction as possible of our naval strength in consideration of the security afforded by the various peace treaties and treaties of guarantee. This was an impossible state of affairs, and would lead to the two countries drifting apart instead of coming closer together. Could not France feel greater security by co-operating with us cordially in securing a reasonable measure of disarmament in all fields than in endeavouring to make further increases in her naval establishment which must inevitably be followed by a similar increase in the naval establishment of other Powers? M. Massigli answered in the affirmative, but said that while their naval armament was in no sense directed against Great Britain, France had to take into serious account the German and Italian navies. In reply I said that a large French programme was far more likely to stir up Italy to adopt a serious building programme than was a moderate French programme, and that the Franco-Italian difficulty could certainly not be solved on those lines. As regards Germany, I had good reason to think that, if France would agree to adopt some reasonable form of limitation of land material of war, Germany would voluntarily adopt the 'framework' of the Convention which we were elaborating here: in other words, Germany would voluntarily waive any special privilege she had under the Treaty of Versailles, and an element of some embarrassment to France would thereby be removed.

We then discussed what would be a 'reasonable' method of limitation of land material of war, after which M. Massigli referred to land effectives, and I recommended, speaking personally and unofficially, that this point might well be taken up either with the Prime Minister or the Secretary of State.

M. Massigli then raised the question of a Mediterranean Pact or, alternatively, of some arrangement under which the United States would undertake not to raise objections on account of League action against an aggressor State. He said that France had never proposed a Mediterranean Locarno which would imply our guarantee of France without any similar guarantee on her part. What was proposed was some form of mutual guarantee against an aggressor by all countries with interests in the Mediterranean. I recommended M. Massigli to study the text of the Four-Power Pacific Treaty, which, while not going quite so far as this, nevertheless seemed to be the type of document on which agreement could be more easily reached. Quite frankly the British Government were not anxious to conclude any agreement of this kind, but they had intimated that they were perfectly ready to discuss the matter and they were anxious to do anything they could, within the limits imposed by public opinion here, to increase France's sense of security. In view of the above considerations this was

6·1 inch. (In 1930 France had seven 8-inch gun 10,000-ton cruisers built, building, or for which credits had been voted, and 66,963 tonnage of older cruisers carrying guns above 6·1 inch.)

The French statement to the press concluded with the words: 'As (France) has always declared, she is ready to examine favourably any formula of mutual guarantees for security which would allow the definite requirements of each one (of the Powers) to become relative requirements.'

clearly a matter in which France rather than Great Britain should take the initiative, and in this view M. Massigli concurred.

Finally, M. Massigli remarked that the crux of the whole situation was really Italy: if Italy would agree to accept figures which were lower than the French figures, then the latter could be reduced. If France were to try to meet us by reducing her figures to the lower levels which we considered so desirable, would we be prepared to do what we could to make Italy more reasonable? I said that it was clearly not in our interest that France's naval strength should be automatically duplicated by Italy but that, in view of the claim insistently put forward by Italy, the situation was a very delicate one. Personally I felt sure that when the time came some solution would be found which would give France a margin of strength and still give Italy some measure of satisfaction.

M. Massigli begged us to remember that there was a considerable difference between France's accepting a *de facto* situation in which her navy had for the past few years been very greatly inferior to the British navy, and a *de jure* situation in which this ratio was perpetuated as a result of agreed building programmes up to 1936. In reply to my observation that each Power would resume its liberty of action after 1936, M. Massigli remarked that whatever we might say now about the probability of further expansion after 1936—and for the purposes of the French Chamber it was essential to preserve the framework of the 'Statut Naval'—everyone knew that we were fixing for 1936 the levels which could not be exceeded unless some political cataclysm had occurred in the meanwhile.

R. L. CRAIGIE

## No. 145

*Notes of a meeting of representatives of the delegations of the United States of America, France, and the United Kingdom, February 13, 1930*<sup>1</sup>

Present: *United States of America*: Mr. Henry L. Stimson, Mr. Dwight W. Morrow, Mr. J. Theodore Marriner.

*France*: M. André Tardieu, M. Aristide Briand, M. René Massigli, M. Paul Mantoux.<sup>2</sup>

*United Kingdom*: Mr. J. Ramsay MacDonald, Mr. A. Henderson, Mr. R. L. Craigie.

Mr. MacDonald suggested that M. Tardieu, who had asked for this Meeting, might open.

M. Tardieu said they were at present dealing with figures, but figures were not the whole life of a nation. He wanted to see the repercussion of his figures on the British and American figures. Their figures had now been

<sup>1</sup> The meeting was held in the Prime Minister's room at the House of Commons. The notes of this and subsequent meetings were made by Sir M. Hankey, Secretary-General of the Conference, and did not bear 'any official character as a Conference document'.

<sup>2</sup> M. Mantoux acted as Interpreter.



communicated to their British and American friends. These figures corresponded to certain national necessities. He could not conceive that they could be regarded as a source of anxiety to the British or American peoples. The figures showed a considerable diminution as compared with those for 1914: no less, indeed, than 450,000 tons. On the other hand, the French were the only nation that had reduced their naval budget as compared with 1914, the reduction being, as a matter of fact, 18 per cent. From the point of view of French security, also, they had to take into account the fact that there was no longer any agreement, as there had been in 1914, as to the distribution of the British and French Fleets. Taking now the position contemplated by the British and American Delegations, namely, of working towards agreed building programmes covering the period 1930 to 1936, the figure he put forward was 240,000 tons of naval construction, of which 197,000 represented replacements, and only 43,000 new construction. If France had need of so much replacement tonnage it was due to the fact that during the war the French dockyards had built no ships, being engaged in manufacturing munitions for themselves and their Allies. Consequently they had contented themselves with their old ships. Before coming to the political question, which was *the* question that had brought them together that day, he wished to offer some special remarks in regard to battleship construction. The Treaty of Washington had provided that France should be entitled to build 175,000 tons of capital ships. Subsequently one ship, the *France*, had been lost, and the *Jean Bart* and the *Courbet* were nearly due for scrapping. Consequently France had had the right to construct about 70,000 tons. Up to now this right had not been exercised. They now had to remember that Germany had constructed a new battleship of a new type,<sup>1</sup> and this compelled France to construct an equal, or preferably superior, ship. If the Germans built more than one ship, France would have to build a second. They wished to take these ships out of their 70,000 tons. If America and England proposed a holiday in capital ship construction, France would accept, subject to a reserve that she might have to use that tonnage for these new ships.

Mr. Henderson asked if the total of 43,000 tons of new construction included this new ship?

M. Tardieu said that it did.

M. Massigli pointed out that if the new ship was built it would not come into commission before 1937.

Mr. MacDonald said, however, that France would be completely committed to the ship before the next Conference in 1935.

M. Massigli said that the French figures distinguished between new construction and replacement. Whatever was laid down in the years 1935 and 1936 could not be completed before January 1, 1937. Consequently its period of usefulness would not begin before the next period. It would then be equivalent to tonnage due for scrapping, so in fact it would be only replacement.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 203, No. 141, note 1.

M. Tardieu said, in other words, that what was put into the table was that during the years 1930 to 1936 the French naval construction should be only 240,000 tons, of which 80 per cent. was replacement and 20 per cent. expansion. Now he would turn to the question of policy.

The production of figures suggested a certain element of suspicion between France, America and Great Britain which was wholly non-existent. France had followed the conversations between Great Britain and the United States with the warmest sympathy and felt no disquietude about any agreement that might be reached. All he asked was that America and Great Britain should show the same point of view and the same spirit towards France as it was clear they showed towards one another. War between any of the three nations was unthinkable. Consequently they should fix their disarmament plans without any mutual suspicion. France, as he had said, had no alarm as to what might be agreed between the other two, and he asked that America, and Great Britain especially, since she was concerned more with the European problem, would not raise any question of there being a menace in the French proposals which were related to the European problem.

M. Tardieu, continuing, said that, to speak frankly, the French position compelled them to look towards the North Sea and the Mediterranean and to think of their communications with their Colonial possessions in North Africa and in distant seas. They were profoundly convinced that the figures they suggested should not be a cause of anxiety to the British or American nations. What they desired was that, just as they themselves looked upon the agreement between the United States and Great Britain as favourable to themselves, so the figures they proposed ought not to be taken as a factor to disturb their mutual relations, or to become a cause of anxiety. There appeared to be two solutions, either that the French figures should be regarded as corresponding to their naval needs; or, alternatively, that reductions should be sought in connection with a consideration of the question of security that always lay behind the problem.

Mr. Henderson thought that too much stress had been laid on the suggestion that the figures were a cause of anxiety. That was not his point of view. The Governments had to consider public opinion. The Conference had been called to effect a reduction, or, at least, a limitation of naval armaments. From that standpoint it was impossible for the United Kingdom Delegation to go before the public with a proposal to scrap five British capital ships while the French, instead of reducing, would increase their number from nine to ten, or even eleven. How could they go to Parliament and state that the Conference was scrapping their own ships and increasing those of their nearest neighbour? He could say this without suggesting that there was a scintilla of apprehension in regard to the French figures. The French proposals were the more remarkable because, since the Washington Conference, very important political events had taken place. Germany was now a member of the League of Nations. Moreover, Germany was to be tied down more than that since, as the result of collaboration between M. Briand and himself, the Kellogg Pact was to be brought into the

machinery of the League of Nations and greatly to strengthen its influence for peace. In addition, Germany had entered into the Locarno Treaty, which was most important from the point of view of French security. The Briand-Kellogg Pact had also now been signed. More recently, the Optional Clause had been ratified. In spite of this, he was to be asked to go to the British public and say that France was going to increase the tonnage of her capital ships. The same remarks applied to other figures put forward by the French Delegation. Instead of being able to say that everything had been scaled down, they were faced with a scaling up. That was a position that must affect all in this Conference. He hoped, therefore, that his French colleagues would see their way to produce some more helpful figures than these.

M. Tardieu said that he would first reply by giving a figure. He had spoken of capital ships. Between the 1st August, 1914, and the 1st January, 1930, the diminution of French capital ship tonnage was 550,000 tons [*sic*]. As regards the remainder of Mr. Henderson's remarks, he was broadly in agreement; for example, in regard to the importance of the admission of Germany to the League of Nations, the Locarno Treaty, and the Kellogg Pact, all of which were international events of considerable importance. Locarno, however, said nothing about naval assistance. The Briand-Kellogg Pact was an effort to consolidate the general peace and he agreed that there was an intention to bring that document and the Covenant of the League together. This, however, had not yet been done and would take some time. In the meanwhile the Conference had to work on the present state of affairs and at the present moment there were no real guarantees. He asked if it was unreasonable that France should propose to replace 197,000 tons of obsolete vessels and to build 43,000 tons of expansion? The total was much smaller than would normally have been built during the war and post-war period. After the war, France had found her shipyards in a very abnormal state of inferiority. They only proposed to put that right in a small proportion. In these circumstances he must ask Mr. Henderson if he really thought that there was anything excessive in replacing the very ancient tonnage that France now possessed by new ships, and in building 43,000 tons of fresh tonnage?

Mr. Henderson said that he could not accept the suggestion that France had no guarantees. The Locarno Treaty gave considerable guarantees in certain eventualities in which Great Britain was involved. There was also a substantial guarantee in the Covenant itself, even before it was strengthened by the inclusion of the Briand-Kellogg Pact, and Great Britain was under the obligation to give assistance in certain contingencies.

M. Tardieu asked Mr. Henderson what, in his opinion, would be acceptable to the United Kingdom Delegation as France's building programme for 1930-1936?

Mr. Henderson said he could not be expected to answer that question. He understood that the Conference had assembled in order to reduce armaments and in consequence of the new Agreements, more particularly

those whereby the Powers renounced war. M. Tardieu had suggested that he was apprehensive. Well, he was apprehensive that the French figures would be so high as to render impossible any reduction in armaments.

M. Tardieu thought that the French figures ought not to be considered very high. The point was that a large proportion of the existing tonnage was very old indeed and, if it was not replaced, the French Fleet would rapidly disappear. They would, of course, do what they could to show their extreme moderation in this matter. The Pacts which Mr. Henderson had mentioned had been taken into full account in drawing up this programme and when it was remembered how great a part M. Briand had played in all those Pacts France was not likely to under-rate their importance. The adjustment of the Kellogg Pact with the Covenant of the League would take some time. In the meantime the Conference was faced with reaching agreement within a few weeks.

Mr. Henderson said that agreement would be reached before a World Disarmament Conference.

Mr. MacDonald said that all depended upon how the question was approached. If the approach were made on the assumption that war had to be prepared for within a comparatively short time, then the British programme was altogether inadequate. On the assumption, however, that for the next ten or twelve years there would be no war, the programme was adequate and provided for needs other than security. When M. Tardieu spoke of the Mediterranean and the North Sea, what danger was he contemplating? What naval force was he providing against? He had formed the impression, after a scrutiny of the figures, that the French programme had been devised in the same mentality as that on which the British Fleet had been drawn up before 1914. That was a serious situation. As the British Government viewed the present outlook, the risk of war was practically nil. Consequently they only maintained nucleus forces. If only a period could be arrived at by agreement, such a period as that fixed in the conversations between Great Britain and the United States at 1936, during which expansions of fleets would be reduced, or would not take place at all, then Europe and the world might arrive at a state of mind in which a later Conference might make further diminutions. All that hope would disappear if a nation insisted on a programme of three-quarters replacement and one-quarter expansion. He asked M. Tardieu if the *mind* of his programme was right. He hoped that whoever was in power in London or in Paris would so cement the relations between the two countries as to be [*sic*] better than ever before in history. M. Tardieu had his public opinion and so had the British Government. France had obsolete ships and so had Great Britain, but Great Britain had a type of ship, the construction of which had been rushed through during the war without the special inspections at every stage which were necessary to a properly constructed ship. He could take M. Tardieu to see such a ship where you could hardly hear yourself talk owing to the rattling due to the deterioration of the bolts. Those ships had fulfilled their purpose in a special way, but were not normal. In regard to those ships, the

British Government was not proposing full replacement. They had considered their needs up to 1936 and had formulated a programme they must adhere to. If no British cruisers were built until 1936 the cruiser strength would be down to forty, and the Admiralty told the Government that if an agreement had not been reached in the general spirit of this Conference, their needs were for seventy. As against that, the Government only proposed fifty, though a full replacement programme would bring the numbers to fifty-eight. He emphasised, however, that the Admiralty programme, looking to all eventualities, was seventy. They could only accept fifty on the understanding that all the nations at this Conference adopted similar standards. He understood that the next step contemplated by M. Tardieu was that certain political matters should be discussed. The United Kingdom Delegation was willing to discuss, though they made no promises. He recalled the pledge to Spain that, if there was any talk of a Mediterranean Agreement, that would be a subject matter outside the Conference, and Spain and other Powers concerned would be invited to attend from the beginning, but, of course, without any prior commitments. He believed that M. Tardieu's attention had been drawn to the Pacific Treaty. He must, however, make it clear at once that public opinion would not stand a Mediterranean Locarno. The United Kingdom Delegation, however, was prepared to talk on the analogy of the Pacific Agreement. There was one important point to which he wished to draw M. Tardieu's attention. If an understanding were not reached at this Conference, or if the understanding was a bad one, one of the things that would happen would be that public opinion would bring up, not only the French Navy, but the Air Force. France was expanding her Air Force so fast that British opinion could not ignore it. France, after all, was within an hour or two of London, just as England was within an hour or two of Paris. Hence, if a satisfactory agreement was not reached, the criticism would not be only from a naval point of view. If France and Great Britain could get together he thought they might cover the whole ground. He wanted to warn M. Tardieu, however, that if the French Delegation adhered to the present programme, if he might use a colloquial expression, 'There would be the deuce to pay'.

M. Tardieu said his idea was as follows. They had touched on so many important points that it would be folly to think of reaching a conclusion that evening. He would like to sleep over their conversation and if possible to meet again next day. He gave the fullest weight to the observations of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary, yet he felt that the cogency of his own arguments had not been reduced. He would like to reflect on these matters and continue the discussion on the morrow. He would repeat the question he had put earlier. If the United Kingdom Delegation thought his figures too high, what figures did they think would correspond to public opinion here?

M. Briand asked for consideration to a point that seemed to him to have been neglected. At one time the French Government had in view a much more modest programme, but in view of the fact that a neighbouring country

had built a ship with great ability which was regarded by all the Admiralties as a masterpiece of naval construction and a very dangerous engine of warfare, French public opinion had been disturbed. They had seen all the world and especially this country discussing the matter, not only in the ordinary press, but also in the technical press and they had been much impressed. Under the Treaty of Versailles Germany was entitled to build six of these ships. After this the French Chamber had again returned to the idea of capital ships. After the Washington Conference when France was granted permission to build 175,000 tons of capital ships, the Chamber had been opposed to them altogether. Now, however, Parliamentary opinion had entirely changed. That had led to the adoption of an extended naval programme. Then their Italian friends—even before the time when they had spoken of Italy as an island—had talked with great eloquence of their conquests in ancient times. This had caused a disquieting situation, though, of course, he did not want to exaggerate it. Nevertheless it had created a state of opinion which the Government had to take into account. When they spoke with reasonable men and pointed out that there was no war menace, their reply was that political guarantees should be arrived at in such a way as to reduce excitement. He thought there was every possibility of conciliating the different points of view. He suggested, therefore, that some of their political experts such as M. Massigli and Mr. Craigie who not only knew each other, but also knew the views of their respective chiefs, should talk the matter over quite unofficially and in a non-committal manner. Perhaps they might discover a light at the end of the tunnel and in the end some result might be reached.

Mr. MacDonald asked if Colonel Stimson had anything to say.

(M. Tardieu had to withdraw at this point to meet Signor Grandi.)

Colonel Stimson thought it inadvisable to say anything at present. All knew his desire to help, but until the others made further progress he did not think he could say much with advantage. He would like to hear some of the other figures discussed.

Mr. MacDonald said they had not had time as yet to hold a meeting of the United Kingdom Delegation on two memoranda which had come into his hands on the previous day from the French and Japanese Delegations;<sup>1</sup> as a matter of fact, he had arranged a meeting to take place in a few minutes. That was why he had been reluctant today to make any counter-proposal to the French figures. He wanted time for further consideration.

<sup>1</sup> The Japanese memorandum was published on February 13. The text is printed in *Documents of the London Naval Conference*, pp. 533-4. The Japanese Government (i) agreed to the postponement of the replacement of capital ships until 1936; (ii) supported a reduction in maximum tonnage from 35,000 to 25,000, and an extension of the age-limit to 26 years; (iii) stated that in ships below the category of capital ships and aircraft-carriers, Japan required 'a strength in adequate proportion to that of the other Powers concerned'. The Japanese requirements were not stated in figures, but special reference was made to 8-inch gun cruisers, in which Japan required 'a minimum strength sufficient for national defence'. Japan also wished a maximum tonnage of 7,000-7,500 to be fixed for 6-inch gun cruisers, and desired to retain her existing strength in submarines.

Colonel Stimson said he had only received the figures at noon that day and first they had had to be translated and then of course he had asked the views of his naval advisers. The questions which specially interested him were those of large cruisers, submarines and the total of cruisers, leaders and destroyers.

Mr. MacDonald suggested they should meet on the morrow at 11 a.m. and go right through the question of categories. He proposed to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty to attend and he suggested that his colleagues should make corresponding arrangements.

This was agreed to.

## No. 146

### *Notes of a meeting of representatives of the delegations of the United States of America, France, and the United Kingdom, February 14, 1930<sup>1</sup>*

Present: *United States of America*: Mr. Stimson, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Morrow, Mr. Marriner.

*France*: M. Tardieu, M. Briand, M. Massigli, M. Mantoux.

*United Kingdom*: Mr. J. Ramsay MacDonald, Mr. A. Henderson, Mr. A. V. Alexander, Mr. R. L. Craigie.

Mr. MacDonald said that today they were coming to closer grips on the detailed proposals of the French Delegation. These proposals had now been examined in detail by the United Kingdom Delegation to see how they fitted the programme which had tentatively been worked out, everything, of course, being subject to an exchange of views and liable to amendment as agreement was reached.

The suggestion of the United Kingdom Delegation was that the *Diderot* class should be scrapped. That would mean that the French would have 7 capital ships, namely, the existing 6, with one additional. He asked M. Mantoux to impress on the French Delegates that this was an informal talk and that he was putting forward these suggestions in the most informal way. Nothing of this would be communicated by the United Kingdom Delegation to the Press.

M. Tardieu remarked that one of the difficulties in a detailed discussion of the French Memorandum and possible modifications thereon was that the French Delegation had not full details of what was the programme of other Delegations for the next six years. Were they expected to present their figures up to 1936 only, or beyond?

Mr. MacDonald said that up to 1936 Great Britain would build no capital ship. The suggestion was to scrap 5 and to build none before December 31, 1936.

M. Massigli said that M. Tardieu had spoken not only of capital ships but of the whole programme. The French Delegation had given a figure to be laid down each year, namely, 40,000 tons to be put on the stocks.

<sup>1</sup> This meeting was held at St. James's Palace.

The American document was not so precise. He gathered, however, that the American programme would involve laying down 80,000 tons a year, and that the similar figures on the British side would be 56,000 to 57,000 tons a year. These were only 'guess' calculations, deduced from the total figures.

Mr. MacDonald said he did not follow these figures. He stated definitely, however, that if this Conference reached agreement, Great Britain would lay down no new capital ship or increase its strength in capital ships before the 31st December, 1936. On the contrary, they would scrap some of the existing capital ships.

Colonel Stimson asked whether Mr. MacDonald's statements as to scrapping were tentative and conditional on agreement?

Mr. MacDonald replied in the affirmative. Of course if there were no agreements everything would be withdrawn.

Colonel Stimson said that was their position, but he wished to be sure that it was the British position also.

Mr. MacDonald said perhaps he had not made himself sufficiently clear.

M. Tardieu asked what would be the American figures for the same period?

Colonel Stimson said that they had excluded capital ships from their figures because they wanted first to discover whether an Agreement was possible in the Auxiliary Fleet not dealt with in the Washington Treaty. They did not consider the question of capital ships worth considering until the auxiliaries had been dealt with. In the Paper he had communicated<sup>1</sup> that morning to the French Delegation, therefore, only the Auxiliary Fleet had been mentioned. In the public statement he had recently issued, however, the proposal was similar to that made by the United Kingdom Delegation, namely, to come down to the Washington figures for capital ships in 1931. He had always made it clear that unless at the present Conference real agreement could be reached over the whole field, the Washington Treaty would have to run its full course.

Mr. MacDonald said he agreed in that. He would like to give one or two additional figures. A rough calculation that had been made on the basis of what M. Massigli had just said showed that the British annual building programme would amount to 40,000 tons a year, all of which would be replacement tonnage. The figure for destroyer replacement, however, was hypothetical and depended upon the agreement reached. The figures for submarines depended on a considerable reduction in the international figures for that class. The cruiser situation included the scrapping of a disputed class of ship, namely, the *Hawkins* class, with 7.5-inch guns. The United Kingdom Delegation proposed, in order to reach an adjustment, that these ships, though neither out of date nor inferior in quality, should be scrapped, on the understanding that they would be replaced by a lower class of cruiser. Consequently the cruiser construction amounted to 20,000

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. This paper gave detailed figures similar to those in the public statement. The latter statement was issued on February 6 and is printed in *Documents of the London Naval Conference*, pp. 513-14.



tons a year, the remainder of 18,000 tons being divided between destroyers and submarines. The whole of this was replacement.

M. Massigli said that that answered his point. He understood it to mean that the British Fleet, at the end of the six years' period, would consist entirely of ships under the age limit, or would it include some obsolete vessels?

Mr. Alexander said it would not.

Mr. MacDonald said that no old ships were being kept in reserve.

M. Massigli asked if some would be in commission?

Mr. MacDonald said 'Neither in commission nor in reserve'.

Mr. Morrow said that it was important to get the figures uniform. It might make quite a difference.

After a pause Mr. MacDonald said that the United Kingdom's figures were as he had given them. They must, however, bear a relation to what was done by others at the present Conference.

Mr. MacDonald said that aircraft carriers were also subject to the Washington Treaty. That Treaty gave the United States and the British Empire 135,000 tons and France 60,000 tons. The British Government proposed that the 135,000 tons should be cut down to 100,000 tons provided the ratios were kept for other Powers. He understood that their United States friends did not accept the figure of 100,000.

Colonel Stimson said he had already explained to his British friends why it was difficult to cut these figures down, owing to the fact that so much of their tonnage was frozen up in two carriers of 33,000 tons apiece. As the art of the Naval Air Service seemed to make smaller vessels possible and preferable, it was necessary to retain a certain amount of tonnage for that purpose. M. Tardieu would recollect that these large carriers had been constructed out of the hulls of two capital ships that had to be scrapped under the Washington Treaty. That was a legacy from that sacrifice in the past.

M. Tardieu said their programme included only 32,000 tons for the six year period. It was difficult, however, to abandon the 60,000 tons because their figures included not only carriers, but certain special ships, for example, schools, and he understood that it was held that these ought to be included within their carrier tonnage.

Mr. MacDonald said the United Kingdom's position was that they were willing to cut down substantially on the Washington Agreement and to enter into any agreement acceptable to other Powers.

Colonel Stimson said he had made his difficulties clear, but not as an ultimatum. He hoped it might be possible to bring the figures down, but they had not yet been worked out as the time had not yet come to attack the Washington Treaty.

Mr. MacDonald said he was willing to cut down on the Washington ratios to any amount. An examination of the figures for existing aircraft carriers, however, had led to the conclusion that it was impossible to get below 100,000 tons. That was the only reason why that figure had been included.

Mr. MacDonald said the 8-inch gun cruiser was the type of ship likely to give most trouble to all. In modern fleet developments it occupied a central

position of difficulty. It was the type on which agreement of the ratio of one country to another would present the greatest difficulties. The United Kingdom Delegation was prepared to cut down to fifteen 8-inch ships. These would be grouped with 6-inch gun cruisers making a total of fifty; that is to say, fifteen of the 8-inch gun type and thirty-five of the 6-inch gun type. Against these fifteen the French proposals showed that up to 1936 they would possess ten as well as two with 7·5-inch guns similar to the *Hawkins* class which the United Kingdom Delegation proposed to scrap before 1936 although they would be by no means out of date. In addition, the French figures showed that two ships of the Washington<sup>1</sup> type would be building in 1936. That gave the French a total of twelve 6-inch<sup>2</sup> and two 7·5-inch gun ships in 1936 against the British fifteen.

M. Tardieu said that the two additional ships would not be in addition to replacement.

Mr. MacDonald said that the precise position was that in 1936 France would have ten 8-inch gun cruisers and two 7·5-inch gun cruisers. After that the two 7·5-inch would disappear and two ships would be building to take their place.

M. Tardieu said that if they considered the period of 1930 to 1936 they would build three cruisers of the Washington type in replacement of 42,000 tons of old cruisers which would be scrapped; consequently, they would scrap 42,000 tons and build three ships of 30,000 tons, so that on balance they would reduce 12,000 tons.

Mr. MacDonald said that method of calculation did not reveal the situation. However it was clear that what France really proposed was to have ten 8-inch cruisers in 1936 and in addition to retain two 7·5-inch cruisers making altogether twelve cruisers of that type. His remarks had been made on the assumption that the 42,000 tons to be scrapped consisted of ships with a smaller calibre of gun than the 8-inch cruisers which were to replace them. In any event the main fact was that France would have ten 8-inch gun cruisers plus two of 7·5 inch.

M. Massigli said that the *Condé* laid down in 1901 and the *Jules Michelet* laid down in 1904 would be scrapped and one other ship had sunk. It was proposed to keep the *Waldeck-Rousseau* and the *Edgar Quinet*<sup>3</sup> which would be 34 years old. They were very old ships, but nevertheless still in use; for example, the *Waldeck-Rousseau* was employed in China.

Mr. MacDonald repeated that in any event the point of substance was that in 1936 France would have ten 8-inch gun cruisers and two 7·5-inch cruisers all of which would in due course remain to be replaced. That is to say, twelve against Great Britain's fifteen, a proportion the United Kingdom Delegation would find very difficult to justify.

Mr. MacDonald said that this would involve a tremendous increase in

<sup>1</sup> i.e. 10,000-ton cruisers mounting 8-inch guns.

<sup>2</sup> This figure appears to be a mistake for '8 inch'.

<sup>3</sup> This name appears to be a mistake for the *Ernest Renan*. The *Edgar Quinet* was stranded near Oran and became a total loss on January 9, 1930.

the efficiency of the French fleet. The United Kingdom proposed to scrap four *Hawkins* which were very good ships and to put in their place ships of a weaker type.

M. Tardieu said that that remark brought him to a point which he had hinted at yesterday, namely that France had need for her naval requirements of a certain number of old cruisers such as the *Waldeck-Rousseau* for the reason that they wanted a ship of that kind in China waters. The fact that Great Britain was scrapping ships of unserviceable age did not affect French needs. The psychological point was that any arrangement which resulted from discussions between Great Britain and the United States—discussions to which France wished every success—nevertheless did not alter French needs; for example, needs for superannuated ships which in due course would have to be replaced.

Mr. MacDonald said that the British were not replacing gun for gun as they scrapped. They were bringing the figures down.

M. Tardieu said that Great Britain had a better margin to play with.

Mr. MacDonald said that was not the case. They also had many old ships. They had cut down their numbers on the assumption that they could get down to those figures without changing the relative efficiency of the Fleet to other Fleets, but if one nation was going to change the relative efficiency of the Fleet, that plan was blown sky-high. He said that Mr. Craigie had just drawn his attention to the form of a sentence used by M. Tardieu. He wished to be quite clear that the efficiency programme of fifty cruisers had nothing whatsoever to do with the conversations with the United States. If, instead of starting on conversations with the United States, he had started with France, the number of cruisers would still have been fifty, for the reason that fifty was the British rock-bottom.

M. Tardieu said that they must, therefore, assume that the figure corresponded to the naval needs of Great Britain. France was in the same position. Their calculation had been made on the basis of their naval needs.

Mr. MacDonald said that was really the whole point. Was it not possible for all to reduce, so as to maintain the present equilibrium on a basis of reduction of tonnage? Their desire was to maintain the equilibrium, but on a lower basis.

M. Tardieu recalled what he had said on the previous day, namely, that France had to consider certain requirements corresponding to naval peace functions, for example, in the Far East. In addition, they had to consider what programme was required in case the peace arrangements should ever break down. A Power with very large effectives could make much larger reductions than a Power with smaller effectives, since the margin was larger and greater elasticity was possible. He could show on a map exactly the use of the cruisers they wanted to retain or to build.

Mr. MacDonald said the French Delegation ought to take into account the reaction of their proposals. The problem they had to solve—unless they were prepared to say they had failed to solve it—was one of the proper relativity of Fleets. He then referred to an article from the Paris correspon-

dent, published in 'The Times' of the 6th December last, describing an estimate, apparently of an official character made in a Senate Committee, of the needs of different Powers, based on all kinds of considerations such as length of coastline, length of communications, amount of trade and shipping, and so forth. According to that calculation, the British Empire's needs, as compared with the French, were as ten and three.

M. Tardieu said that it was not an official communication at all. It was the imaginative effort of an individual Senator.

Mr. MacDonald said that no one suggested that the proportion should, in fact, be ten and three, but this was a calculation that would be quoted against him. He asked M. Tardieu to put himself in his place. He would have to announce that the French Navy was to be increased by fifty to seventy per cent. of efficiency by replacement and by the substitution of a very powerful new Fleet for an old Fleet of large numerical size. He would have to go to the House of Commons and explain all this. He would, of course, be out of office in a week. That might be in accordance with the vicissitudes of political life, but the really serious matter was the change it would produce in public opinion. That was the serious matter. He added that very careful calculations had been made from the point of view of national needs, including those of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa and, in addition, from the point of view of political needs. From both points of view the calculation showed that the French figures, if adopted, would require a great expansion in the British figures. They could no longer rest upon fifty cruisers, nor on fifteen 8-inch gun cruisers, even if they could rest upon thirty-five 6-inch gun cruisers, which was doubtful.

M. Tardieu said that he was willing to do all he could to help towards an agreement. On the previous day he had put a question to Mr. MacDonald, which he had not been able to reply to. Instead of telling him what the French figures ought to be to correspond to the British, Mr. MacDonald had been stating that if the French figures were maintained, he would have to increase the British. Would he now be prepared to say, on the basis of the British figures, what would be his view as to the corresponding French figures?

Mr. MacDonald said it was always rather awkward to do that, not owing to lack of candour, but because it seemed as though one Power was trying to impress its views upon another. An answer could be given in one of two ways; first, supposing the French figures remained what they were, to state what would be the equivalent British programme and, second, to say that, if the British figures were not to be forced up, what they would regard as the French equivalent to secure equilibrium? In the elastic manner in which the whole conversation was conducted, the number of French 8-inch gun cruisers should, in his view, be more in the region of six than of ten in 1936. The suggestion he made was that France should rest on the programme of ships already built and building. He asked his French friends to consider the possibility of resting on the present figures of built, building and authorised, namely, seven 8-inch gun cruisers.

M. Tardieu said he would reply by a question in regard to the amount of tonnage to be retained. The *Condé* by 1936 would be 35 years of age, the *Jules Michelet* 36, and the *Ernest Renan* 34 years of age. The *Edgar Quinet* had already sunk. In consequence it would be materially impossible to come down to these figures, whatever the French desire to meet the British view. The French political point of view compelled him to speak clearly and frankly. The British said that, resulting from the conversations with the United States of America, they estimated their cruisers at 50, but when the French produced their figures it was claimed that the relativity of nations was upset. But the French had to consider relativity in regard to problems in the North Sea and Mediterranean, and their figures were calculated to meet risks which were essentially French risks. If they had been discussing reductions with Great Britain and America only, there might have been all kinds of possibilities. But other Powers besides those at this Conference had to be considered, and the figures now proposed would be absolutely unacceptable to the French Parliament. Just as Great Britain and the United States did not regard each other's programmes as disquieting, so he demanded the same treatment, namely, that the French figures should not be regarded as disturbing. The only way to deal with the question appeared to be to consider it against the political background. Discussions on limitations of figures, though necessary, would not create the right atmosphere for a settlement. Consequently he asked that the question might be looked at from the political angle, to see if a basis of agreement could be found in that manner.

Mr. MacDonald asked to correct a mistake into which he thought M. Tardieu had fallen, namely, in his supposition that France was to be expected to keep ships that were 37 years old. That had not been his intention at all.

Colonel Stimson said he had gathered that Mr. MacDonald's proposal was that the French should keep 7 cruisers of the Washington type. He had the figures of the French proposal. These indicated 3 built, 3 building, and 1 authorised. He understood Mr. MacDonald to mean that those were to be retained. He had not understood, however, that there would be any objection to the retention of old ships as well.

Mr. Craigie interpolated 'So long as they were not to be replaced by new Washington cruisers'.

Mr. MacDonald asked that there should be no misunderstanding. He had not included in his calculations these old ships of the *Condé* type. What he did press was that these ships should be scrapped and disappear from the tonnage before 1936, so that in 1936 they would not be faced with a claim that this old tonnage was due for replacement. What he had intended was that France should retain 7 Washington cruisers.

M. Tardieu said that in other words this meant a reduction of 30,000 tons of Washington cruisers, that is to say, 52,000 tons would be scrapped compared with their programme.

Mr. Craigie said that 24,000 tons of old cruisers would be scrapped and the others would not be built.

Mr. MacDonald said that since his Government had come into office last June they had scrapped 30,000 tons of ships. 20,000 tons of these had been ships that had actually been begun, and their building had only been stopped at a heavy cost. The third ship had been authorised. They proposed now to scrap 40,000 tons of the *Hawkins* class and to replace them by ships of lower value, and if they could reach an agreement there were other ships which they were prepared to scrap.

M. Tardieu said that, if he understood aright, the proposal involved the scrapping of the *Waldeck-Rousseau* and *Ernest Renan*.

Mr. Craigie said 'Before 1936'.

Mr. MacDonald said he appreciated M. Tardieu's difficulties, and so far as he was concerned he would do his best to make matters easy. If the retention of these ships until 1936 would be of assistance he was willing to consider it, on condition that when the Conference met in 1935 those tons would not be considered as due for replacement. That was the position in which he placed himself. His advisers had not authorised him to say that France was justified in having more than 6 cruisers of the 8-inch type. He was, however, willing to make a political suggestion and to throw in one extra cruiser, making 7.

M. Tardieu said therefore that the figure of seven would be final.

Mr. MacDonald replied that that would be the French tonnage for future replacement.

M. Tardieu said that was practically the same as for Germany.

Mr. Alexander pointed out that the German cruisers did not have 8-inch guns.

Mr. MacDonald said that if M. Tardieu was right that would settle the matter. If the figures proposed by his naval advisers would put France in that position he would not make the offer.

Mr. Henderson asked if M. Tardieu was not mixing up the German cruisers with battleships.

M. Tardieu said they were entitled to six battleships and six cruisers and with the interpretation of the Conference of Ambassadors this gave them two more. The Germans would have the right to replace and France had other areas to think of such as the Mediterranean and their dependencies abroad. Their total figure would be below the German. The Italian fleet would include several modern cruisers.

Mr. MacDonald said that M. Tardieu need not pursue the theme. He was in agreement with him. He recalled, however, that when the calculations had been agreed on a certain standard they would have to be related to the ships of the other Naval Powers represented on the Disarmament Commission. If what was settled could not be adjusted to the Treaty of Versailles it might have to be modified.

M. Tardieu asked how France could be limited to seven 8-inch gun cruisers if Italy was to have six.

Mr. MacDonald said Italy would have to come into the agreement.

M. Tardieu pointed out that Italy demanded parity; what was the French situation then?

Mr. MacDonald asked M. Tardieu to consider his situation. If France asked for a large fleet and Italy asked for parity both France and Italy would have big fleets and what would his position be?

Colonel Stimson suggested that as M. Tardieu had to leave that day and would not be back for two or three days, the interval should be spent in obtaining a statement of the fleets of all Powers such as was being obtained piecemeal in these discussions.

Mr. Alexander said that the British experts had tried to obtain the compilation of such a table, but that the experts of some of the other Powers could not agree.

Colonel Stimson suggested that in order not to lose time the statement might include the following:

1. Existing tonnage.
2. Programmes up to 31st December, 1936.
3. A summary showing the position of each Power in 1936 including a statement of what had become of all the old ships that had disappeared.

Mr. Morrow said that most of the Delegations had these figures but they were in different forms.

Mr. Alexander suggested that the best way would be for the British Admiralty to prepare a schedule of the ships and submit it to the other Powers who could then make their own corrections.

Colonel Stimson thought this was a very good idea. Would the Washington standard tons be shown?

Mr. Alexander said that these tonnages would be shown.

M. Massigli asked that special vessels might be included.

(*Note.*<sup>1</sup> During the above discussion a copy of the Treaty of Versailles had been sent for from which it transpired that Germany was entitled to six cruisers. The existing cruisers are small size and have to be replaced at 6,000 tons or below, see Article 190.)

Mr. MacDonald referring to the Treaty of Versailles said he was glad that his proposal had not been in such a form as M. Tardieu had feared or he would have had to apologise for making such a proposal.

M. Tardieu agreed to the proposal that the Admiralty should prepare a table.

Mr. Henderson asked that the table might include a note as to what tonnage was allowed to Germany under the Treaty of Versailles.

Mr. MacDonald suggested that the next meeting should be held on Tuesday next, 18th February, at 3 p.m. in his room at the House of Commons.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This note appears at this point in the original text.

<sup>2</sup> Owing to the illness of M. Tardieu and the fall of his administration (on a financial question not connected with naval affairs) on February 18 this meeting was not held. M. Tardieu formed a new administration on March 2, and on March 5 a new French delegation was appointed. The delegation (without M. Tardieu) arrived in London on March 6. M. Briand continued as Minister of Foreign Affairs in the new administration.

*Notes of a meeting of representatives of the delegations of the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Japan, February 17, 1930<sup>1</sup>*

Present: *United States of America*: Mr. Stimson, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Reed, Mr. Marriner.

*United Kingdom*: Mr. J. Ramsay MacDonald, Mr. A. Henderson, Mr. A. V. Alexander, Mr. R. L. Craigie.

*Japan*: Mr. Reijiro Wakatsuki, Mr. Tsuneo Matsudaira, Admiral Baron Kiyokazu Abo, Mr. Haroshi Saito, Mr. Tamao Sakamoto.

Colonel Stimson said he would ask Senator Reed to go through the details of the Japanese proposal.<sup>2</sup>

Senator Reed thought it might be helpful to run through the suggestions in the various categories so as to understand their respective points of view.

The first point was capital ships. Substantially the Japanese proposal was similar to the American proposal for a holiday in capital ship construction with the exception that the Japanese limited the holiday to 1935 whereas they went to 1936. This difference, however, was not important. Then came the suggestion as to the maximum displacement in gun calibre and extension of life of capital ships. He noticed, however, that there was no suggestion for scrapping in order to bring down the figures to those of the Washington Treaty. On this subject he had had an informal talk with Admiral Abo on the previous Friday. The Admiral had told him that the Japanese Navy were reluctant to scrap the *Kongo*. He had replied that the American Delegation was indifferent as to which ship they scrapped. The *Kongo* had only been mentioned because she was old and due for scrapping first. He himself had also explained a point he thought Admiral Abo had not quite understood, namely that the suggestion for a holiday was bound up with the proposal to bring numbers down. They were both part of the same suggestion. He had also explained that the American Delegation thought it useless to stop competition in one class and to leave the nations open to spend in other categories without limitation; that is to say, the capital ship proposals were part of the whole scheme. They could not take the responsibility of going home and saying that they had agreed to a further limitation in capital ships without the agreement also covering the categories outside the Washington Treaty.

Colonel Stimson thought that Mr. Wakatsuki would understand the reason for this. All had seen difficulties that had grown up owing to the fact that the 1922 Treaty was incomplete, with the result that a competition had grown up in auxiliary vessels with resulting evils. He had spoken of that when he met Mr. Wakatsuki at Washington; consequently the American Delegation had come here with a distinct proposal that if any Treaty was accomplished it must stop all competition; otherwise they would not achieve what they came to attempt.

<sup>1</sup> This meeting was held at St. James's Palace.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 217, No. 145, note 1.



Senator Reed said that for all the reasons stated they hoped that the Japanese Delegation would in a short time be able to make a statement in favour of scrapping ships down to the Washington limit of 15 : 15 : 9.

(Mr. Henderson and Mr. Alexander entered at this point.)

Mr. Wakatsuki reading from a paper said that of course it was desired that economies should be realised in relation to capital ships as well as the abolition of competition in other classes of ship. In regard to the proposal to scrap capital ships, of course it was desirable that something should be done to accomplish a lightening of the burden. One thing to which the Japanese Delegation attached importance was to maintain the foundation of the Washington Treaty exchanges. It was their opinion that the Washington Treaty provided a balance of the Powers which must be maintained and they held that the tables agreed to at Washington were so formulated that the balance would be maintained until 1936. They thought it would be breaking up the balance if a change were made in that respect. He quite realised that the question of a naval holiday and the scrapping proposals were bound up together and if a naval holiday could be instituted once more, it would meet the Japanese point of view.

Senator Reed said that the proposal in regard to the scrapping of capital ships hit Great Britain and the United States hardest. Three ships would have to be scrapped by the United States Navy which were not scheduled for scrapping until, in the case of two, the year 1934, and in the case of the third 1935. The British ships to be scrapped were not due for scrapping until 1934 and 1935. The *Tiger* which had substantially the same armament as the *Kongo* but with a greater speed was one of these. Thus the British scrapping would be anticipated by five years as compared with an anticipation in the case of Japan by three years. What the American Delegation had in mind in coming to London was reduction as well as limitation. A good deal of money could be saved to the Treasuries of the three countries by bringing down the numbers of capital ships.

Mr. Wakatsuki replied that to the mind of the Japanese Delegation this was very important and in that spirit they proposed to observe the stipulations of the Washington Treaty most loyally. Consequently he would wish to maintain the balance agreed to at Washington. The necessary economies could be effected by replacing capital ships with vessels of a smaller type. When they compared types of ships there were many points of view to be taken into consideration, but his main point was to preserve the balance of Washington and to obtain the economies by making ships smaller and instituting a naval holiday.

Senator Reed suggested they should now pass to the question of aircraft carriers. He was glad to observe that the Japanese Delegation agreed that the defects in the Washington Treaty should be corrected and that the class of aircraft carrier below 10,000 tons should no longer be left unlimited. On that point the views of the Japanese Delegation and their own were similar.

Mr. Wakatsuki said that that involved the greatest sacrifice on the part of Japan, but they were willing to make it.

Mr. MacDonald observed that the Japanese proposals in regard to aircraft carriers contained no suggestion for bringing down the total tonnage.

Senator Reed also noted that there was no reply in the proposals to the British suggestion to reduce tonnage to 100,000. Perhaps the Japanese delegates would say what their attitude was towards this proposal.

Mr. Wakatsuki replied that in their view the Washington tonnage should be adhered to.

Mr. MacDonald said therefore that the only change was to include tonnage of under 10,000.

Mr. Wakatsuki agreed. The total tonnages allowed would be sufficient for this.

Senator Reed said this brought them to the two tables of suggestions. The American Delegation was much disappointed that their offer of a reduction from 21 to 18 cruisers had not inspired a similar offer of reduction on the part of Japan. The American suggestion for a reduction was apparently to be met by a proposal of increase in the Japanese quota. He drew attention in particular to the figure of 17,600 tons of new cruisers in the last column of table 2.

After a brief observation by Mr. Wakatsuki (which was not heard), Senator Reed continued that the American offer of reduction from 21 to 18 8-inch gun cruisers had been made after it had been represented that the British plans would be very much more difficult if they persisted in the figure of 21. If he understood the Japanese proposals correctly they would give a ten per cent. advantage over Great Britain in the matter of 8-inch guns. He was wondering what the effect of that would be on the British.

Mr. Wakatsuki recalled that at the beginning of the Conference the Italian Delegation had proposed that ratio should be the method of limitation. He himself had not concurred in that proposal because he had thought it inopportune to discuss in that manner and had hoped to discuss figures at some such consultation as the present. When they discussed figures, however, it was necessary to bear in mind the ratios. He was not going to propose that ratio should be mentioned in the Treaty, but merely that it should be kept in view. Apart from the question of ratio, he wished to emphasise that in making their proposals Japan had not the faintest idea of war with America. But on the borders of the Pacific it had to be remembered that there were only two Powers, Japan and the United States. In comparing their strength with that of some other Navy, they could not avoid looking at the American standard. Now that they were starting the discussions on the basis of the Washington Treaty, perhaps Japan ought to have asked for parity, but she did not do so. She only asked for protection, that her navy might stay at home and defend the country, but from technical studies of the past, as well as experiences of past wars, they had come to the conclusion that they must have a 70 per cent. ratio towards the United States of America. In the past, when British and German relations had been under consideration, it was considered that if the strength was less than 60 per cent. it was not sufficient to defend the country. Japan considered that the 60 per cent. should be raised

to 70 per cent. compared with the strongest Power. They could not defend the country with only 60 per cent. The Japanese people could never be brought to understand how the country could be defended with that strength, so, if America had fifteen 8-inch gun cruisers, or eighteen, or twenty-one, Japan would want 70 per cent. of that figure. As the number of large cruisers increased, so the strength of small cruisers could be reduced. What they desired was that that percentage should be taken into account in calculating the figures, though they did not ask for it to be expressly written into the Treaty. He recalled that Senator Reed had referred to the number of guns and compared the British strength with the Japanese. At the Washington Conference, however, the number of guns had not been taken into account. The United States had built one or two ships, he thought, with nine 8-inch guns, although they possessed older ships that were armed with ten guns. Probably they had decided that they ought to put more weight into the armour, or fuel supply, or speed, so, when ships were compared, guns ought not to be taken as the sole criterion. On the other hand, the Japanese Delegation thought it more appropriate to compare in terms of tonnage, as at the Washington Conference, and not in terms of guns.

Mr. MacDonald hoped that his Japanese friends would not ask the United Kingdom Delegation to accept this position. If they put themselves in his place, they would see what an impossible position it would be. Mr. Wakatsuki had said that, so far as the Pacific was concerned, when considering the possibility of a conflict, there was one Power on one side and the other on the other side and that a ratio must be established between them, but there was a Power to the south as well as to the east and west. It must be remembered that that was the situation and that, out of a fleet of fifteen 8-inch gun cruisers, two were maintained in the South Pacific and five in China Waters. These ships were tied up in this way. If a ratio were established which gave Japan 112 guns and the British 104 throughout the whole of their fifteen ships, the peace of mind of the latter must be upset. It was no use talking to Australia and New Zealand of principles of defence if this was the position. He hoped the Japanese Delegation would take this into account before they said their final word in that discussion.

Mr. Wakatsuki said that in comparing the Japanese and British strengths, perhaps the figures did bring Japan rather close, but this was only as regards numbers. Their list included some rather old ships and in light cruisers they were greatly inferior. If Great Britain and the United States of America had the same number of 8-inch gun cruisers, the matter would be much easier to settle. The fact of the discrepancy produced a situation which justified Mr. MacDonald's comment. They had, however, to take into consideration the Japanese inferiority in 6-inch gun cruisers and the fact that they had no idea of competition with Great Britain.

Colonel Stimson said he would like to say to Mr. Wakatsuki that the things he had said in Washington two months ago were reinforced by what had taken place here. They had made a great effort to meet the Japanese situation. Mr. Wakatsuki would remember that he had reminded him in

Washington that when, in 1922, the battleship fleet had been under consideration, they had taken into account the Japanese necessity for self-defence; first, by the adoption of a ratio which gave her an assurance of being able to defend herself in her own waters and, secondly, by agreeing not to alter the defence of their imperfectly defended bases in the Western Pacific. He thought that they had met the Japanese requirements very fairly. In their latest proposals, the American Delegation had gone one step further. Bearing in mind the Japanese views, they had proposed a cruiser fleet on a basis of reduction that was based on the same proportion as the battle fleets in 1922. He asked Mr. Wakatsuki to bear in mind that the cruiser fleet was an adjunct of the battleship fleet and that the proportion of one was normally in the same proportion as the other; so they had gone out of their way to assist the Japanese Delegation. He shared M. Wakatsuki's view as to the impossibility of hostilities between the two nations. The utmost desire of his Government was to look into what he believed to be the true relation of the two countries. They did not regard Japan as a disturbing influence in the Pacific. As he himself had said publicly more than once, they regarded Japan as a great stabilising force. Japan presented a great advantage to America in her present position as an effective and stabilising force in the Far East. He valued more than he could say the improved relations which had grown up between the two countries since the Washington Treaty; so he could only echo what Senator Reed had already said in regard to disarmament and he was sure that the disappointment would be the same among the American people if Japan were seeking to change the general situation agreed upon ten years before. That would make a bad impression on the American people. Consequently, he was disappointed that the step that had been taken in lowering the proposed large American cruiser fleet to a limit which fell below what their naval experts advised had not been received in the same spirit as that in which the offer had been made. In taking this step the American Delegation had thought they were solving the chief problem and meeting the objections which they would have expected if the technical naval advice had been adopted. If the offer were not accepted in the same spirit, it would not be understood in America.

Mr. Wakatsuki said he might be repeating what he had said before. However, if they increased the number of 8-inch gun cruisers, they were prepared to reduce that in light cruisers and destroyers. In any event, they would not demand more than 70 per cent. If America had twenty-one 8-inch gun cruisers, they must ask for 70 per cent. of that figure and, in that eventuality, the number of light cruisers and destroyers would be very small. If the American figure was eighteen, they would still demand 70 per cent. and the number of light cruisers and destroyers would be larger. If America would cut down to only fifteen, then Japan would not build any 8-inch gun cruisers and their light cruisers and destroyers would be comparatively numerous. In that way they were planning not to increase their strength, but aiming at reduction. He wanted his colleagues to understand his posi-

tion. This was an occasion on which they ought to talk very frankly. Among the Japanese, people were to be found who were saying that at Geneva the Americans had claimed 450,000 tons and that now they had increased this claim to 477,000 tons, that is to say, by 27,000 tons. If the Americans could see their way to adopting the Geneva figures, the Japanese would come down correspondingly, keeping the same ratio. They were ready to adjust their strength, always keeping the 70 per cent. proportion of American strength. As to capital ships, he would have to differ from Colonel Stimson, as the Japanese view was that a 60 per cent. ratio was not a proper insurance. They considered it rather unsatisfactory. At Washington their proposal had been for 70 per cent. and this had been based on the opinion of the technical experts and their own experience in past wars. That had become the natural condition and that was the percentage regarded as necessary. However, it would appear impossible that agreement could be reached if they maintained their 70 per cent. claim and so eventually they had agreed on 60 per cent. on condition of the maintenance of the *status quo* in fortifications. That was how they regarded that question and they had only agreed to that 60 per cent. as regards capital ships; but the Japanese people felt very strongly on this matter and if, in future, any agreement was to be reached on other classes of war craft, they would have to demand 70 per cent. That was the national opinion and conviction, not merely his private opinion. He was not in a position to disregard the 70 per cent. demand, or to sign a Treaty without that percentage. He was in a very difficult position in that respect and could not put his signature to anything less than 70 per cent. He recognised the concession made by the American Delegation in coming down to twenty-one, but nevertheless he could not go below 70 per cent.

Senator Reed said that a word ought to be spoken to the effect that in America it was fully realised that there was no reason why America should force war on Japan. There was absolutely no advantage to be gained, so he agreed with Mr. Wakatsuki that war between the two nations was not to be thought of as a possibility. Their people also realised that there was no conceivable gain for Japan in forcing war upon America. They regarded the maintenance of a strong Japanese force as an assurance of peace and they thought that the Japanese would reciprocally so regard the maintenance of a strong American Navy. Their people also recognised that a large part of their own fleet must always be tied up in the Caribbean and the Atlantic, that is to say, on the European side of America. Their people would be greatly disturbed to discern any motive for an increase in the relative strength of Japan and a Japanese programme that called, not only for the maintenance of every existing ton that Japan had, but also for the building of additional tonnage, simultaneously with the scrapping of a large part of the American destroyer tonnage. In these circumstances, they would not understand how Japan could be building new ships and scrapping nothing. He thought he was justified in saying that it was impossible that such a Treaty could be ratified by the United States Senate. He, personally, would

not consider himself justified in signing such an agreement. His colleagues could speak for themselves.

Mr. Wakatsuki said that one point he wished to make was this, that supposing the Japanese proposals were accepted *in toto* they also would have to scrap some light cruisers and destroyers. He also felt hope from the frankness of the present talk. One thing the Japanese people could not understand was why they should be refused seventy per cent. when America had no idea of attacking. As long as America held that ten per cent. advantage it was possible for her to attack, so when America insisted on sixty per cent. instead of seventy per cent., the idea would exist that they were trying to keep that possibility, and the Japanese people could not accept that. He was in a very difficult position personally, but he could not accept less than seventy per cent.

(Mr. MacDonald had withdrawn some time before this point.)

Mr. Henderson said that his Delegation were just interested spectators. Not much headway was being made but perhaps enough had been said to give both Delegations something to ponder over. He asked when the next meeting would be.

Colonel Stimson thought the ground had been pretty well covered today. He agreed with Senator Reed as to the consequences in America of signing such a Treaty as this. There would be no difference of opinion in the American Delegation on that point. They had therefore reached a situation where for the moment there was nothing more to be said.

Senator Reed suggested that both Delegations should go away and think the matter over. They parted in friendship; they would keep in touch and perhaps something would occur to one or the other. There was no object in fixing any definite meeting at the moment.

Mr. Wakatsuki thought that probably it would be necessary to meet several times on this question and to discuss these matters with cool heads.

Colonel Stimson said they were ready to meet at any time. He asked if a meeting had been arranged with the French Delegation on the morrow.

Mr. Craigie said it had been arranged to take place in the Prime Minister's room at the House of Commons at 3 p.m.

Colonel Stimson said that M. Tardieu would not be present. He telephoned to Paris that morning and had learned that M. Tardieu would be unable even to see visitors before Thursday.

## No. 148

*Note by Mr. Craigie of conversations with M. Massigli between  
February 13 and February 18, 1930*

*February 19, 1930*

Since my long conversation with M. Massigli of the 13th February<sup>1</sup> I have had a number of talks with him, the upshot of which can be summarised as follows.

<sup>1</sup> No. 144.

(1) M. Massigli handed me, at my request, a table (copy attached)<sup>1</sup> showing the proportion of France's total tonnage, as proposed for 1936, which will be *over-age* at that time. It will be seen from the accompanying copy of this document that the total over-age tonnage will be 114,188 tons.

I said to M. Massigli that really our main difficulty arose over the retention by France of this 114,188 tons of over-age tonnage, and particularly over the kind of prescriptive right to replacement which this might carry with it if the figure were embodied in her total programme for 1936. I wondered whether the position might not be eased a little if the French over-age and under-age figures for 1936 were to be recorded separately and it were to be understood that no right of replacement for the over-age figures was recognised by the other signatory Powers. M. Massigli said that he thought that there would be no objection to showing the figures separately, though France could not agree that anything should be said in the treaty which would *remove* any right she might have of replacing this tonnage should she consider it necessary.

Finally, we agreed that, as we were not seeking to define at this moment what was to be the precise position after 1936, possibly it might be arranged for France to retain a certain amount of over-age tonnage to deal with her colonial commitments on the understanding that the question of the ultimate replacement of such tonnage would be left to the next Conference, we meanwhile continuing to hold that such replacement would be unreasonable and France that it would be reasonable.

(2) I also informed M. Massigli, at his request, of the maximum tonnages which we considered it would be fair for France to retain in the light cruiser and submarine categories in relation to the British programme, namely, 182,000 tons for the 6-inch gun cruiser class and destroyers, and 60,000 tons for submarines. M. Massigli remarked that both figures were 'quite impossible'. As regards the light cruiser class, I ascertained from him that no less than 46,748 tons out of the total of 258,000 tons would be composed of 'special vessels' (i.e. sloops, minelayers, etc.) which, under the British proposal, would come within the cruiser category on replacement. We agreed that we might examine the possibility of narrowing the difference between us in this category by retaining the 'special vessels' in a separate category and not mixing them up with the cruiser class to which they do not seem properly to belong.

(3) *Political questions.* M. Massigli said that the French delegation were thinking carefully over the possibility of reducing their existing figures in return for some form of agreement in regard to the Mediterranean and a working arrangement with us with reference to our future course of action at Geneva in regard to land and air disarmament. I hinted at the desirability of a reduction in the French aircraft programme and, rather to my surprise, M. Massigli said that he would also give thought to this possibility. He stated that he hoped to let me have by to-day, in unofficial form, his

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

general suggestions as to the lines on which what may be called the 'political' discussions might usefully proceed.

The last of these conversations took place yesterday. To-day M. Massigli informed me that in view of the French crisis, it would really be waste of time for us to continue our conversations for the moment. While fully agreeing with this view, I impressed on M. Massigli how embarrassing it was that the talks between the British and French delegations should have to be held up at this particular juncture, and he agreed to let me know immediately he was in a position to engage in future conversations.

R. L. CRAIGIE

## No. 149

*Note by Mr. Craigie of a conversation with Signor Rosso*

*February 19, 1930*

M. Rosso called on me to-day and handed me the Italian memorandum<sup>1</sup> which is being communicated to the press. I remarked that it contained a clear representation of the Italian case, but did not seem to make any contribution towards an ultimate settlement. After some further discussion of the memorandum and the table of figures attached to it, I put the following point to M. Rosso: up to the fall of the French Government, we had been engaged in trying to induce the French to reduce the figures which they had put forward and which were based on (although not identical with) their 'Statut Naval'. We were endeavouring to see whether there was anything which the British delegation could do to assist the French in coming down to a lower figure. But was it not even more in the Italian interest than in our interest that the French figure should be reduced? M. Rosso having agreed that this was the case, I said that surely we should not be left alone to think out inducements for French reductions, but that there should be some contribution from Italy. Nothing would ever be achieved by Italy's simply standing on a formula and making no constructive contribution to the settlement of our difficulties. I then outlined, purely as an idea of my own, the possibility of France having a 'margin' of naval strength corresponding to some such factor as her extra-European colonial commitments. Another way might be to examine whether a yardstick on the Anglo-American principle might not assist in a solution. In other words, was it not possible for Italy to devise some yardstick, or if necessary one or two yardsticks, which would enable her, while agreeing to a certain French margin of naval strength, to feel that she had in fact secured her claim of parity.

M. Rosso seemed to agree that it was now time for Italy to make some contribution to the settlement of our difficulties. He did not by any means

<sup>1</sup> This memorandum, and an explanatory note for the press, are printed in *Documents of the London Naval Conference*, pp. 527-32. This memorandum repeated the Italian claim to parity at 'any figure no matter how low' with any other Continental European Power. The memorandum did not contain figures of a proposed Italian building plan.



reject these suggestions out of hand, but said that, after talking to M. Grandi, he would try and work out something and would come and see me again.

R. L. CRAIGIE

## No. 150

*Note by Mr. Craigie of a conversation with M. Massigli*

*February 25, 1930*

M. Massigli called to see me this morning to enquire what had been happening during his absence in Paris. I said that we had been getting on very well with the talks on the Japanese ratio question, and that I, personally, felt that we were steadily working towards a satisfactory arrangement as between the three Powers. I also informed him that I had had one or two talks with Signor Rosso and had been urging him (as indeed we had urged the Italian Government before they came into the Conference) to produce a programme which, I hoped, would be a very low one, though of course the Italians would have to reserve their right of modifying the programme if the French Government were unable to reduce their figures from their present level. M. Massigli said he thought it would be most helpful if the Italians would produce a programme as we should then all know better where we stood.

The question of guarantees in the Mediterranean then came up, and I told M. Massigli that there was a growing feeling amongst all delegations that it was little use offering France fresh guarantees since she simply pocketed them without apparently experiencing any increase in her sense of security. It was most disappointing that, after all that had been done to give guarantees of security, the French should have put up such an exceedingly high programme.

M. Massigli did not consider that this criticism was well founded. Since 1922 France had been constantly striving for some international agreement which would give her the only guarantee worth having, namely, some form of international protection in the event of her being subjected again to a flagrant attack. While agreeing that the various peace pacts all had a certain value in calming world opinion, he pointed out that there was nothing either in the Covenant of the League or in the Briand-Kellogg Pact which really afforded such a guarantee even to a Power which was the innocent victim of the most flagrant violation of the Peace Pact. As regards the Optional Clause and the General Act, Powers acceding to such general international instruments necessarily made a number of reservations which greatly affected their value when it became a question of considering how far France dared to reduce her existing naval and military forces. Locarno was of the utmost value so far as Germany's western frontier was concerned: however, it definitely left open the question of Germany's eastern frontier so that if trouble arose between Poland and Germany at any moment, France might be forced in, but the guarantors of Locarno would retain their

liberty of action. It was therefore essential to France to take into consideration not only Italy but Germany, and to keep at Brest a naval force sufficient to cope with any serious situation arising out of the problem of Germany's eastern frontier. These preoccupations, coupled with France's preoccupations in the Mediterranean, were reflected in a building programme which we could not have regarded as exaggerated if we had adhered to our original programme of 70 cruisers, and which showed the genuine concern of the French people that they might at any moment be called upon to deal single-handedly with a serious situation either in the North Sea or the Mediterranean.

I thanked M. Massigli for his frank statement, and confined myself to saying that the difference between us was that we, and most of the other Powers, attached a much greater value to such instruments as the Covenant of the League of Nations, Locarno, and the Paris Peace Pact than the French appear to do. France should surely realise that, if her policy were a genuinely pacific one, the League of Nations would never leave her to stand alone against any unprovoked act of aggression on the part of another Power. This fact was so certain and so obvious that it was difficult to see how French security could really be increased by the multiplication of treaties of guarantee.

R. L. CRAIGIE

### No. 151

*Draft of a Mediterranean Pact communicated to Mr. Craigie by  
M. Massigli<sup>1</sup>*

[A 2356/30/45]

*February 26, 1930*

a) Les Hautes Parties contractantes s'engagent à ne rien faire qui soit de nature à porter atteinte aux droits dont jouit actuellement l'une d'entre elles sur les territoires relevant de l'autorité de celle-ci et dont les côtes sont baignées par la Méditerranée, non plus qu'à l'exercice dans la Méditerranée par une Haute Partie Contractante et ses ressortissants, des droits de libre navigation reconnus par le droit international.

b) S'il venait à surgir entre certaines des Hautes Parties Contractantes un différend relatif aux droits visés à l'article 1 qui n'aurait pu être réglé par la voie diplomatique, arbitrale ou judiciaire et qui n'aurait fait l'objet d'aucune recommandation unanime du Conseil de la Société des Nations, ces Puissances devront se concerter avec les autres Parties Contractantes en vue d'un règlement amiable de ce différend par tels moyens qui paraîtront appropriés en la circonstance.

<sup>1</sup> For a statement by Mr. Craigie in connexion with this draft see No. 168. There is no record in the Foreign Office archives of any conversation between Mr. Craigie and M. Massigli on February 26. From a later note (July 24) by Mr. Craigie the draft appears to have been communicated on February 25.

The Prime Minister enquired whether M. Briand thought it would be useful if, as Chairman of the Conference, he were to arrange for a tripartite conversation between M. Briand, Signor Grandi and himself.

M. Briand replied that this certainly might be useful at the appropriate moment. Signor Grandi was, however, intending to discuss the matter with M. Piétri, the French Minister for the Colonies, who spoke Italian, and no doubt the colonial question would then come up. Before coming to the Conference the conversations between the French and Italians on this point had made very good progress, but at the last moment representations by the Italian colonial authorities had prevented an agreement from being reached. This conversation would take place on Monday<sup>1</sup> or Tuesday, and if it were not successful, M. Briand thought it would be very useful to have a conversation between Mr. MacDonald, Signor Grandi and himself, as the Prime Minister had suggested. In the meantime he would probably arrange himself to have a further conversation with Signor Grandi early in the week, and he would endeavour to induce the Italian delegation to produce a programme.

As regards the American side of the negotiations, M. Briand thought that if we did not appear to be making any progress it might be well to await M. Tardieu's arrival and then to have a meeting between Mr. MacDonald, Mr. Stimson, M. Tardieu and himself.

The Prime Minister concurred in the procedure proposed by M. Briand. He said he was thinking out some form of words which would conform closely to the joint statement issued by the President and himself on the termination of his visit to Washington; this formula, while taking account of the difference in the American and the British responsibilities in regard to European problems, would nevertheless recognise their joint interest in the maintenance of peace throughout the world, and he thought some such form of words might be embodied, with American assent, in the preamble of the naval treaty. Possibly by this means something could be devised which would give France the necessary assurance as regards America's interest in bringing about a peaceful solution of disputes arising between European countries.

M. Briand thought that this was a good plan, and Mr. MacDonald promised to continue to work upon it.

It should be mentioned that after this conversation, M. Massigli took Mr. Craigie aside and stated that pending the resumption of conversations with the Americans, it was very desirable that we should inform the French delegation as soon as convenient how far it would be possible for this country to go, independently of the United States, in the way of a treaty of mutual guarantee.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> March 10.

<sup>2</sup> This additional paragraph appears at this point in the original text.

*Extract from a conversation between Sir R. Vansittart<sup>1</sup> and Signor Grandi  
and Signor Bordonaro, March 11, 1930*

[A 1943/1/45]

. . .<sup>2</sup> He (Signor Grandi) then spoke of Italo-French relations. I asked him why he did not include (*sic*) an all-in arbitration treaty with the French. He said a treaty of this nature had long been in contemplation, but he had felt the ground had better first be cleared by the liquidation of the two North African questions on which the two Governments were at present divided. I said I hoped that he did not mean that the treaty and the two settlements were to be made interdependent, but merely that the arbitration treaty would get a better start if the ground had first been properly cleared. He replied that was certainly what he did mean and hoped it was understood. He also added that the arbitration treaty should not be connected with the question of naval parity and I gathered that that was another reason why at present he was rather hanging back. I said that no doubt he realised Italy was meeting with criticism in some quarters on the ground that she had made no concrete contribution to the Naval Conference. He said he understood that. I asked him then whether he did not consider that to come forward at some opportune moment with an all-in arbitration treaty might not assist him in covering himself from this criticism in as much as it might assist in the direction of reassuring the French, which seemed to be at present one of our problems. He agreed with this view, and said he was glad of the suggestion, which he would bear in mind for use at a favourable opportunity.

Reverting for a moment to North Africa, he asked me if I was aware of the exact extent of the divergence between Italy and France. I said I understood that the divergence between the amount of territory which Italy desired and the amount which France was prepared to cede was a very wide one. He replied that the difference was not really so great, and added that he would send me full particulars which would make this clear. In fact, he wished us to be quite fully informed on the subject.

Reverting again to the question of parity he said it was quite impossible for Italy to concede what had been recognised as her right at Washington: were he to do so he 'would be shot at the first station across the frontier'.

<sup>1</sup> Sir R. Vansittart succeeded Sir R. Lindsay as Permanent Under-Secretary of State on January 1, 1930. Sir R. Lindsay succeeded Sir E. Howard as H.M. Ambassador at Washington.

<sup>2</sup> The earlier part (not printed) of this conversation dealt with matters not related to the naval question.

*Notes of a meeting of representatives of the delegations of the United States of America, France and the United Kingdom, March 12, 1930<sup>1</sup>*

Present: *United States of America*: Mr. Stimson, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Morrow, Mr. Marriner, Commander Harold C. Train.

*France*: M. Briand, M. Dumesnil,<sup>2</sup> M. Massigli, Contre-Amiral Descottes-Genon, Contre-Amiral Darlan, M. Mantoux.

*United Kingdom*: Mr. J. Ramsay MacDonald, Mr. A. Henderson, Mr. A. V. Alexander, Mr. R. L. Craigie, Captain R. M. Bellairs, Mr. M. MacDonald.<sup>3</sup>

The Delegations had before them a report of the discussions held at St. James's Palace between representatives of the French and United Kingdom Delegations, with representatives of the United States present. (*Appendix*.)<sup>4</sup>

Mr. MacDonald said that the document before the Delegations was the result of a discussion that had taken place in regard to a document prepared by Mr. Craigie, to which he had referred at the last meeting. . . .<sup>5</sup>

After some further remarks, which he suggested were not of sufficient importance to be translated, Mr. MacDonald said he understood that the French wanted to build one capital ship to replace the lost ship *France* and that they desired to know the British views on that.

M. Massigli said that the point had been raised in his conversations with Mr. Craigie. They desired to reach agreement whenever possible on the calibre and displacement of the new capital ship, but it was not one of those questions that they wanted to settle immediately.

Mr. MacDonald said that everything which was agreed to at the present time was only tentative and subject to the conclusion of a final agreement. For example, the agreement to the modification proposed by the First Committee in the French formula (transactional proposal) was not absolute unless a complete settlement was reached. It was impossible to agree to these matters piecemeal, so this question of capital ships could be reserved for the present.

In regard to the 8-inch gun cruisers, he noted that France desired on the 31st December, 1936, to have 100,000 tons of modern type, as well as 24,850 tons of old cruisers, making in all 124,850 tons.

Mr. Alexander said that this was an increase of approximately 28,000 tons as compared with the position on the 31st December last.

<sup>1</sup> This meeting was held in the Prime Minister's room at the House of Commons.

<sup>2</sup> Minister of Marine.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. S. T. Cross was also present as Interpreter.

<sup>4</sup> Not printed. The appendix (i) contained a short statement that four meetings had been held but that it had not been possible 'to arrive at any accommodation'; (ii) referred to technical conversations between British and French representatives in order to elucidate the French figures. These figures were set out in detail in the document which Mr. MacDonald mentioned in his opening statement.

<sup>5</sup> The passage omitted referred to corrections in the headings of figures.

Mr. MacDonald said that appeared to his Delegation to be rather a big expansion.

Mr. Alexander said it was largely due to the retention of two old cruisers. By the 31st December, 1936, 100,000 tons of new cruisers would be completed and they retained, in addition, old cruisers of 24,850 tons. The United Kingdom Delegation had already intimated that the maximum number to which they could agree was seven.

Mr. MacDonald said that the large cruiser tonnage was undoubtedly one of the difficulties. From a note he had before him, he understood that they were required largely for colonial purposes. He wondered if their French friends would consider how far it would be possible to substitute 6-inch gun cruisers and thus to bring down the number of these heavy cruisers.

M. Dumesnil replied that the figure in question had already been indicated by the French President of the Council as essential to the needs of France. Moreover, at the present time France had twelve large cruisers and only asked to retain the same number. If they required twelve cruisers, that was to say ten modern and two of old type (which would eventually be replaced by 20,000 tons of new cruisers), the reason of this was in order to have six in the Mediterranean, giving equality with Italy, and six outside the Mediterranean for distant seas and to compensate for the German Fleet. For this purpose it was necessary to have 10,000 ton ships, since the radius of action of the smaller cruisers was insufficient for distant waters, for such purposes as protection of distant lines of communications, of colonies and of peace work in the colonies. Those purposes justified these figures. Great Britain, he pointed out, at the present time possessed five large cruisers in the China Seas and France needed *some* cruisers in the aggregate for all such purposes.

During the translation of this speech Mr. MacDonald interpolated at this point an enquiry as to what relation the word 'some' had to the British cruisers?

M. Dumesnil said it had no relation. In the Far East, before the war, France had had a considerable fleet, including a number of fighting ships. Now they only had one cruiser and six despatch vessels. Great Britain had five large cruisers besides a small cruiser and a flotilla of destroyers, submarines, etc. While other European nations did not maintain important fleets in the China Seas, Holland had a fleet of 30,000 tons which was double that of the French Fleet. That was an example of the kind of need that France had for these ships.

The continuation of M. Dumesnil's original speech was to the effect that, in regard to the question of calibre of guns, cruisers in these distant waters must be able to get the better of second-class cruisers, or auxiliary cruisers which might be fitted out in time of war and which might have armaments superior to that of the second-class cruiser.

Mr. Alexander said that M. Dumesnil had used the same argument in his discussions with him. He himself had pointed out that there was no

comparison between French and British overseas commitments especially if the wide range of the British interests in the Pacific was taken into consideration. For example, in Australia and New Zealand only very small forces were maintained. Before the war Great Britain had had a battle fleet in China waters. Then M. Dumesnil had said that 8-inch guns were required to give a wide radius of action and for the protection of colonies, but in discussing submarines the French Delegation had used exactly the same argument insisting that they were important for defence of these same objects. He put the question did they depend upon cruisers or on submarines for these objects?

M. Dumesnil referring to Mr. Alexander's first point said he had no desire to underrate the importance of Great Britain's interest in the Far East and her consequent need of a fleet. He agreed that before the war Great Britain had a considerable fleet in the Far East. Even now Great Britain had five large cruisers as well as one small cruiser, one aircraft carrier, a destroyer flotilla and a submarine flotilla. Before the war France also had had a considerable fleet in China of which he gave particulars and now she had only one cruiser and six despatch vessels. Consequently the diminution of French strength in those waters was quite considerable. Yet she had to provide for the protection of vital interests in the colonies. As regards Mr. Alexander's point that France required both large cruisers and submarines for colonial defence, he could see no contradiction. Both classes were required for this purpose, cruisers of great range of action and submarines. His claim therefore was for twelve cruisers of which six were required for the Mediterranean, two to counter the German fleet and that left only four. That was not a large number for a country that was the largest colonial Power after Great Britain and which in time of war had need of large numbers of ships for escorting purposes. He thought their demands were really extremely moderate.

Mr. Alexander said he thought it very important to reply at this point as M. Dumesnil's observations indicated the main difference between the two Delegations. France asked for twelve 8-inch cruisers of 124,850 tons, by the 31st December, 1936, as well as 100,000 tons of submarines. Great Britain with larger commitments only asked for fifteen large cruisers and if other Powers would agree they would consent to reduce their submarine tonnage to 40,000 tons. Did not that show clearly the difference of approach to this question by the two countries?

Mr. MacDonald thought that the position was a very simple one. The French figure amounted today to 255,689 tons for cruisers, destroyers and submarines. By the 31st December 1936 it was proposed that it should amount to 453,484 tons. How could such a figure be brought to a Disarmament Conference Committee?

Mr. Henderson interpolated that it was a Disarmament Conference to prepare the way for the Preparatory Commission which again was to prepare for a World Conference.

Mr. MacDonald continuing said that the French frequently spoke of

security. Italy would not accept this situation and if these figures were adopted would continue building up to them and before 1936 the plans of disarmament for the whole of Europe would be in the melting pot. The Covenant of the League, Locarno, the Optional Clause would all have gone for nothing. It would mean that this was a military Conference and not a Disarmament Conference. This was the sort of thing that happened before the war. You would have alliances starting up again. If this programme was necessary the diplomatic reactions were going to be of the most serious character. He hoped that some different result might ensue from the tonnage calculations because a result like this would be absolutely impossible.

(At this point the Division Bell rang and the Prime Minister, Mr. Henderson, Mr. Alexander and Mr. M. MacDonald were absent for a short time.)  
On resuming:

M. Briand said he would give a short explanation of the French position in regard to this discussion. He asked his English friends to hear him with friendly good faith. France in this Conference had adopted a role of fair play. They had been asked to produce their dossier. They had given it. They had been asked for figures. They had furnished them. They had been asked to discuss them. They had accepted that the United Kingdom Delegation should discuss their position. They had treated their friends with the utmost frankness. For Great Britain the situation was to establish an equilibrium of naval strength. For this it was necessary to obtain some point of comparison. They had found this in the figures for the United States, Japan and France, but what was the French basis of comparison? It was in regard to Italy. Italy said 'Whatever you build I build'. France had information that Spain would demand the same, so in the Mediterranean there was no basis of comparison to be found, only a point of interrogation. In order to provide a basis of comparison in the Mediterranean one dossier was lacking, that of Italy. They did not know what tonnage Italy asked for. If Great Britain were in France's place, they would not agree to take less than France was asking. They agreed in the necessity of a reduction of armaments, but they could only do it if they could get an agreement in regard to the Mediterranean. If there were no such agreement they had to bear in mind that Italy had six cruisers. To secure her position in the Mediterranean, France required the same. As regards the position in the North Sea, though he hoped and thought that it was not serious at present, nevertheless they must have two ships and in addition to them there was the defence of oversea interests. He had to bear in mind also that France had a Parliament and a public opinion. Mr. MacDonald he recalled had spoken of considerations of peace. He did not at all doubt that these considerations existed and he had taken them fully into account. Mr. MacDonald had spoken of alliances, but in these days no alliances were possible. They existed no longer. The Covenant had made alliances of the old type out of the question. What was now demanded was pacts of mutual security in which all nations concerned could take part. It was no longer one group of nations against another. All could be admitted. Such arrangements had



quite a different character and no resemblance to the old alliance pacts. These groups would undoubtedly form themselves. In the meanwhile it was necessary to make some arrangement to ensure that this Conference should reach a successful conclusion. He recalled that during the war France did not build a single ship, consequently they came out of the war with no navy at all. There could be no comparison between fleets that had already been constructed and fleets that remained to be built. He recalled that these discussions on figures had been begun by M. Tardieu who would be here in a few days' time. He thought in the meanwhile the discussion should stand over until the Italian Delegation had formulated a programme of<sup>1</sup> the Conference. Then only would it be possible to see clearly what was to be done; otherwise he did not see how to make progress.

Mr. MacDonald said that if the two Delegations were going to act between themselves on the assumption that both were trying to reach an accommodation and to secure a limitation, if not a reduction, of armaments and a cessation of expansion, he did not see why they should be delayed until the production of the Italian figures. He had already made suggestions to Italy, with a view to the production of programmes and he had referred to the matter again with Signor Grandi on the previous evening after the meeting of Heads of Delegations. He had done all that was possible in that matter. If Signor Grandi found it impossible to do this, why should not the British and French Delegations continue on the basis of assuming a very large prospect of peace? The programme before them was based on a very large prospect of war. This building programme was not required as a transition from the present uncertainty to what he himself regarded as the certainty of peace. This programme would, undoubtedly, produce counter-building. He hoped, therefore, that a reduced programme might be produced. It had been said that during the war the French Fleet had not built a ship, but since the war there had been very substantial building in France. He noticed that since 1924 60,000 tons of 8-inch gun cruisers had been laid down. Italy had responded. This was competitive building. If France had laid down ten, Italy would have laid down ten. In small cruisers, France had laid down five of 33,000 tons and Italy six of 29,600 tons. In destroyers, since 1923, France had laid down fifty of 91,758 tons and Italy thirty-seven of 47,000 tons. In submarines, France had laid down sixty-seven of 64,600 tons, the largest provision by far of any nation in the world. Italy had responded with thirty-two of 27,000 tons. It was only in this respect that Italy had not responded practically one hundred per cent.

Mr. Alexander observed that the submarine tonnage was without precedent except in the production of 'U' boats during the war.

Mr. MacDonald said that he had produced this material in order to say that there was really no case for basing the present programme on the fact that the French Fleet had been neglected during the war. On top of the post-war construction, they proposed an expansion of 200,000 tons of 8-inch

<sup>1</sup> This word appears to be a mistake for 'to' (i.e. until the Italian Delegation had given to the Conference details of their building programme).

gun cruisers and downwards before 1936. He himself was the last person to interfere with anyone. If France thought this figure was necessary, it was their affair and not his, but if that was the French need it was useless to talk of a Preparatory Commission to prepare for a Disarmament Conference. On the contrary, it was envisaging a complete expansion of all the fleets in the world.

M. Briand said he would like to discuss this question in the most concrete manner and, for this purpose, would put a question. Italy had on the stocks six cruisers of 10,000 tons. Suppose for a moment that Italy would not abandon those, then France was entitled to build an equal tonnage for the Mediterranean; or was it suggested that she should have less? The French attitude, he maintained, was not unreasonable and she could not, with justice, be expected to have a smaller tonnage than Italy in the Mediterranean. If this were admitted, the next point to bear in mind was that France had great interests in China, including an enormous colony where, in the present circumstances, the situation was somewhat anxious. She required ships there to defend her interests no less than her prestige. Holland, which had somewhat similar interests to protect, had a fleet double in tonnage to the French. If Italy said to the Conference, 'I will abandon parity', then he thought that some arrangement was possible. In regard to submarines, these were not constructed for offence. He recalled that at the Washington Conference France had been treated as a naval Power of the third rank. Why was that? Was it due to the French position in the world? No. It was because she had constructed no battleships, nor armoured cruisers. If France had not built battleships or armoured cruisers, it was because she wanted to concentrate on a defensive weapon and had, for that reason, built a certain number of submarines. That fleet was in no sense to be regarded as for offensive purposes. Such difficulties were apt to arise at international conferences and ought not to prevent a disposition to take all steps to slow up construction pending a conference where this question could be discussed, but it was necessary to have the essential elements before them. So long as Italy stood out, it was impossible to make progress. The French Delegation also had to take account of public opinion and of Parliament which would throw the Government out in forty-eight hours if they weakened. He proposed, therefore, that on the return of M. Tardieu, they should reopen the discussion and, in the meanwhile, that all efforts should be concentrated on trying to induce Italy to produce her figures.

Mr. MacDonald thought it was impossible to take the matter further. That morning he had made a note which he would only allude to with the utmost reserve. Supposing Italy were willing to come down to a figure of, say, 400,000 tons, what difference, he asked, would that make to the French proposed programme? He did not ask for an answer straight away.

M. Briand said he would certainly consider an answer. The problem would be examined, as he regarded it as an important suggestion. The French Delegation would be asked to consider and reflect upon the proposal and bring back a solution to him. What they desired was some basis for

discussion and comparison. He hoped that M. Tardieu would be here either on Friday<sup>1</sup> or at the latest on Saturday. If in the meanwhile information could be obtained from the Italians, that would be very interesting.

Mr. MacDonald asked if M. Briand could give any information as to his conversation with Signor Grandi?

M. Briand said the conversation had been long but had led to no short result, and had remained to some extent lost in atmosphere. They had exchanged reciprocal good wishes, but there had been no definite result. He thought Signor Grandi would like to take a favourable attitude, but undoubtedly he had difficult elements to take into consideration, and he himself, who knew the political situation so well, could understand this. Signor Grandi's attitude had not always been negative. He thought if some other influence could be brought to bear on him besides his own, the result might be useful. He himself had said that parity must correspond to realities. France was obliged to spread her forces over the whole world, whereas Italy could concentrate in the Mediterranean. Signor Grandi had not denied this, but had made no corresponding proposal. The result was that the French Delegation were in the difficult situation of being faced with the unknown. One of the difficulties of the Italian Delegation was their Press, which had, as it were, a common editor, and could not be described as too friendly to France.

Mr. MacDonald, alluding to a reference that had been made to putting pressure, asked that any such idea might be dismissed from everyone's mind. He was not trying to put pressure on his French friends. They were only trying as colleagues to obtain an agreement that would look and be decent. The idea of putting pressure was quite out of his thoughts.

M. Briand agreed. The advantage of the Conference was to enable free discussion to take place, and this should always be possible. It should, of course, never take the form of bringing pressure to bear. The Conference, however, could only be complete if everyone participated. If only Italy would co-operate by producing a programme, some advance might be made. But without that the position was difficult. . .<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> March 14.

<sup>2</sup> The concluding paragraph of these notes gave the text of an agreed press communiqué to be issued after the meeting.

## No. 155

### *Record of a conversation between Mr. MacDonald and Signor Grandi, March 13, 1930<sup>1</sup>*

The Prime Minister began by suggesting to Signor Grandi the possibility of securing a Franco-Italian political settlement which would go a long way towards resolving our present difficulties.

Signor Grandi replied that Italy was ready to sign a treaty of friendship, guarantee and arbitration, but that a settlement must first be reached on the

<sup>1</sup> Signor Rosso and Mr. Craigie were also present.

outstanding questions of nationality in Tunis and the African frontiers. He referred to M. Tardieu's statement that the moment was not opportune for securing an agreement, but added that although he was not optimistic, he was quite ready to talk with the French.

The Prime Minister said that if he could be of any assistance in the discussions with the French he was ready to do what he could.

He then asked whether Italy could suggest any figures.

Signor Grandi replied that he was not able to do so.

In reply to the Prime Minister's question as to whether we might assume that Italy would agree to a position in 1936 of somewhere between 400,000 and 500,000 tons, Signor Grandi said that logically Italy would be bound to accept any figure under her formula, but agreed that some point between the two might be assumed to be acceptable provided France admitted their claim to parity.

Signor Grandi then explained the position in regard to the margin in capital ships and old age<sup>1</sup> cruisers, and pointed out that 7,000 tons had recently been scrapped. He suggested that over-age tonnage should be left out of the proposed agreement, thus enabling the French to keep their existing lead in capital ships and over-age tonnage.

The Prime Minister thanked Signor Grandi for his useful suggestion and said that he would examine it carefully.

<sup>1</sup> This word appears to be a mistake for "over-age".

## No. 156

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir J. Tilley (Tokyo)*  
*No. 39 Telegraphic [A 1987/1/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 15, 1930*

Your telegram No. 72,<sup>1</sup> last paragraph.

According to our information and that of the American delegation there was no strong public opinion on this subject before the conference opened, so much so that the Japanese authorities felt it necessary to make a determined campaign of propaganda in order to stimulate a sufficiently aggressive national attitude. If this is so, cannot the present expressions of opinion be regarded as in some degree artificial and confined to circles usually subject to Government propaganda?

I have not hitherto sent Your Excellency details of the conversations because the situation has been constantly shifting and what appeared to be gained one day was lost the next. But a point has now been reached at which it is important you should have full information of the position.

The position here is that the Japanese delegates when they arrived declared that they had three primary demands: 70 per cent. of the strongest

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. In this telegram Sir R. Tilley reported very shortly an interview between the American Ambassador and the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Sir J. Tilley referred in a concluding paragraph to the strong public feeling in Japan with regard to the Japanese naval demands at the conference.

naval Power in 8-inch gun tonnage; 70 per cent. in cruisers, destroyers and submarines as a whole, and the retention of the existing Japanese submarine tonnage (built and building) of 78,000 tons. We maintained at the start, and have consistently maintained since, that this demand is too high in all respects and that, in our view, a 60 per cent. ratio gives Japan an adequate defensive strength. In particular we have made it clear throughout that we could not accept a position in 8-inch gun cruisers which would give Japan more than her existing 12 cruisers (built and building) aggregating 108,400 tons to our existing 15 cruisers (built and building) aggregating 146,800 tons. Under this arrangement Japan would have 74 per cent. of our 8-inch tonnage, which is really the utmost limit to which we can be expected to go. As regards submarines, we have pressed for their abolition, but, failing abolition, we wish to place the submarine figure of the various navies at the lowest possible point. To our mind the figure claimed by the Japanese delegation of 78,000 tons was altogether exaggerated.

Throughout the negotiations the Japanese have left it to the Americans and ourselves to make any advance towards a compromise, themselves remaining strictly on the basis of their original demand. This has made negotiation both slow and difficult. A tentative arrangement has, however, now been reached between the principal Japanese delegate, the American delegation and ourselves on the following lines:—

The Japanese fleet in December 1936 not to exceed the following maximum:

8-inch gun cruisers . . .	108,400 tons
6-inch gun cruisers . . .	100,415 tons <sup>1</sup>
destroyers . . .	105,500 tons
submarines . . .	52,729 tons

making a total of 367,044 tons, or 67·8 per cent. of the British total for auxiliary craft of 541,729 tons and 69·8 per cent. of the United States figure of 526,229 tons. Japan's acceptance of the figure for 8-inch gun cruisers will be subject to a reservation that if the United States exercises her option to construct more than 15 8-inch gun cruisers, Japan will re-affirm at the 1935 conference her claim to replace by four 10,000 ton vessels the four *Furutakas* when they reach the age limit. The United States Government on their side would, under the proposed compromise, agree that their 16th, 17th and 18th 8-inch gun cruisers, if constructed at all, will not be laid down before 1933, 1934 and 1935 respectively. Thus none of these cruisers could come into commission before 1936.

From Japan's point of view the advantages of the proposed arrangement are as follows: she secures a 70 per cent. ratio of the United States strength in auxiliary craft as a whole; she has secured the postponement until 1933-35 of the laying down of the last three American 8-inch gun cruisers, and she will have the full right to re-assert at the 1935 conference her claim for additional 8-inch tonnage if and when the United States consider it necessary to exercise their option to construct these additional cruisers (which in our view is doubtful); and she secures a submarine figure which she can reach in

<sup>1</sup> In a telegram of March 18 this figure was corrected to 100,450 tons.

December 1936 by the simple process of wastage in respect of vessels attaining the age limit and without any premature scrapping.

The above compromise represents a considerable departure from our original attitude, and during the negotiations we have made concession after concession to Japan before reaching the present position. It is useless for the Japanese Government or the Japanese delegation here to think that we can go any further. On the other hand, I understand that hitherto Mr. Wakatsuki and Mr. Matsudaira have not been able to win over their naval colleagues in the delegation, and that strong opposition is to be expected from the Japanese Admiralty even to a compromise so favourable to Japan as the present one. I understand further, that the French Embassy have been endeavouring to enlist the Japanese Government as an ally against the United States and Great Britain, particularly on the question of submarines. I can hardly believe that the Japanese Government would be so unmindful of the wider aspects of policy as to lend themselves to such a manoeuvre merely to secure some temporary advantage at the present conference, but I think it would be well for Your Excellency to keep in close touch with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and to use all your influence with the Japanese Government in favour of a reasonable settlement of this particular question at the earliest possible moment.

Your Excellency will no doubt be keeping in touch with your United States colleague, though you will of course do nothing which would give the Japanese Government a good pretext for saying that they were being subjected to anything in the nature of joint or concerted pressure at Tokyo.

The figures given above are particularly secret, and you will probably think it undesirable to mention them to anyone except possibly to the Minister for Foreign Affairs himself should he wish to discuss the matter.

#### No. 157

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir R. Graham (Rome)*

*No. 27 Telegraphic [A 1986/1/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 15, 1930*

As Your Excellency is aware, Italy's position at this conference has been that she claims the right of building up to the strength of the strongest Continental European Power. Until that right is conceded, the Italian delegation can produce no figures, can suggest no programme, can take little part in the official debates, and such part as they can take is subject to a general reservation in regard to the attainment of parity with France.

The necessary consequence of this attitude has been that Italy has seemed a little out of the picture. In view of Signor Grandi's instructions it has not been easy to do much negotiation with him; the Prime Minister has urged him on several occasions to produce a programme of some sort for the period up to December 1936 which will be covered by the agreement, even though he qualifies his proposals with whatever reservation he may think it desirable

to make in regard to parity with France, but so far without success. In the last day or two, however, Signor Grandi has shown himself more helpful in suggestion and, although he still declares his inability to produce any figures, we are now following a line which may possibly lead to progress being made.

Nothing would be gained by giving you details at this juncture of conversations which have so far led to no concrete results, and I am most anxious to avoid any appearance of going to the Italian Government over Signor Grandi's head; but I should be glad if Your Excellency would keep in touch as much as possible with Signor Mussolini and, speaking as from yourself, point out that it is clearly as much in the interest of Italy as of Great Britain that the French figures should be reduced from their present very high total of 713,000 tons of completed ships in December, 1936, included in which total would be about 354,000 tons of cruisers and destroyers and 99,600 tons of submarines, as compared with about 218,000 tons and 36,800 tons respectively of completed vessels in these categories today. The present Italian attitude of simply claiming parity with France has the effect of increasing our difficulties in inducing the French Government to reduce their programme, and that<sup>1</sup> it ought not to be left to us to bear the whole burden of working for a solution which is as much in Italy's interest as in our own. You should add that you know that His Majesty's Government have at no time urged upon the Italian delegation any action which would have the effect of prejudicing their claim to the principle of parity with France.

Following for your own information only.

I gather that some of the naval elements in the Italian delegation are especially obstructive and appear to be inspired by the hope that the total French programme will be put through (even at the cost of the failure of the Conference) because this will automatically lead to a big expansion of the Italian navy. I understand that, on the other hand, Signor Mussolini himself is definitely anxious to prevent any undue expansion in the Italian navy provided that his principle of parity with France is not interfered with.

I should be glad of your views on this latter point, and generally on the situation as outlined in this telegram.

<sup>1</sup> The text here is incorrect. From the original draft it is clear that Sir R. Graham was being instructed to point out to Signor Mussolini that His Majesty's Government should not be left 'with the whole burden', &c.

## No. 158

*Record of a conversation between Mr. MacDonald, Mr. Alexander,  
M. Briand, and M. Tardieu, March 16, 1930<sup>1</sup>*

The first part of this conversation lasted from 11 a.m. to 1.30 p.m.

M. Tardieu began by making a general statement of his position. He declared that France did not question our figures, but our thesis that France

<sup>1</sup> This conversation took place at Chequers. Captain Bellairs, Mr. Craigie, and MM. Dumesnil, Massigli, Moyset, and Mantoux were also present.

must reduce in relation to us raised great difficulties for her, seeing that Italy refused to move at all. M. Tardieu recalled that the origin of the present conference was to be found in the discussions at Geneva. Italy's silence in London and the fact that her claim to parity was unacceptable to France made further progress difficult, and it would perhaps be necessary to revert to Geneva.

M. Tardieu had had the opportunity during his time in France to make contact with all sections of French opinion, and he was impressed with the complete unanimity in France for the policy of the French Government. So far as the Chamber was concerned, it was not only the case on the Right but also on the Left, where such men as M. Paul-Boncour and M. Herriot were steadily on the look-out. Public opinion in France could be summarised as follows: (1) it was generally felt that the arguments used here in the case of an Anglo-American agreement ceased to be valid when applied to France, and this difference was not understood by French public opinion; (2) a bad impression had been created in Washington by Mr. Hughes' speech; now, despite assurances that the Hughes method would not be adopted, the same impression was being created because France was being presented with figures which were calculated in proportion to the British figures, which were in turn calculated to suit the United States; (3) it was argued that Great Britain had secured what interested her most, namely an arrangement with the United States; but in negotiating with the United States we had been able to work on certain fixed data, whereas France was faced with uncertainty in the Mediterranean.

M. Tardieu then referred to the French memorandum of December 20 and to our reply, which showed that the difference between us was not fundamental but rather a question of methods. France had 457,000 tons less than before the war. Hers was the only budget which had been reduced by as much as 18 per cent. On coming to the present Conference France had reduced her annual construction tonnage under the *Statut Naval* from 46,000 tons to 40,000 tons. The only thing which would make further reduction possible was a political agreement. A five-Power political engagement was not possible owing to the United States attitude, but a European arrangement might be obtained which would give France the additional security guarantee which she desired. The Franco-Italian position was made increasingly difficult by Italy's continued silence; but by far the most important question was the possibility of an agreement with Great Britain.

M. Tardieu drew attention to the attitude of the morning's newspapers which referred to the Franco-Italian question as the sole difficulty in the way of an agreement.

The Prime Minister said that the Sunday papers were quite irresponsible. He agreed with M. Tardieu as to the difficulty of finding a solution to the Italian question in the absence of a definite Italian programme. The Italian attitude had a certain appearance of sweet reasonableness about it which was in fact misleading. If a political agreement could be reached



between France and Italy some way might then be found of resolving our own difficulties.

The Prime Minister then suggested that discussions might be begun on the assumption that there was no Italy in the world. The conversations would be entirely provisional unless and until Italy had agreed to figures. Alternatively discussions might take place on a basis of a hypothetical figure of 400,000 tons for Italy. The Prime Minister referred to the success of our negotiations with the United States which were based on the biggest reduction possible. Referring to the French figure of 18 per cent. reduction on the naval budget, he pointed out that the comparable British figure was 39 per cent. As regards cruisers, our objective had been 70. Actually we had at one time 63 cruisers, building and authorised, on the way to our objective of 70. Our proposal at the present Conference was for 50, and we should be prepared to stand on that proposal, provided that we could get an equilibrium on this level with other Powers. The Prime Minister begged the French delegates to consider the difference in the evaluation of our respective needs. He emphasised that when this country undertook obligations under Article 16 of the Covenant and Locarno, it meant to carry them out, and the present Government meant to carry them out also. Had the proposed agreement been for twenty years it was doubtful whether His Majesty's Government would have felt justified in their tonnage reductions, but for five years a big risk for peace was possible.

As regards the United States opinion was strongly against any political engagement. There was, however, no line drawn between political neutrality and economic neutrality, for the latter was almost impossible in present day conditions. The question was whether the United States would undertake not to support its citizens who got into difficulties as a result of trading with a nation which had broken the Kellogg Pact and was being subjected to economic sanctions. If not, and if blockade measures were carried out in support of Article 16 of the Covenant, Great Britain would have to bear the brunt of any conflict with the United States.

M. Briand stated that the possibility of reaching any agreement by discussions between himself and Signor Grandi had led to no result. Italy's position, though moderate in appearance, was in reality impossible, since all Italy would agree to was the reduction of the French navy by half, i.e., to Italy's own level. He pointed out that before the war Italy's figure had stood at exactly half of the French strength, and still was half. There was no justification for her claim. Would we, for example, have accepted such a claim by Japan? France's position in the Mediterranean was very dangerous, and she had made it quite clear before the Conference that any claim for parity by Italy could not be accepted.

What was the true position about Italy and Locarno? When the arrangement had been drawn up between Great Britain, Germany, Belgium and France, Italy had begged to be allowed to come in, and France had reluctantly agreed. But it was absurd that Italy should now use this self-imposed guarantee as a reason for parity. Italy then asked for a modification of the

Act of Algeciras. Again France reluctantly complied, but there was now not the slightest recollection of this in the Italian mind. Signor Grandi did not dispute that France's responsibilities were greater than Italy's, but nevertheless Italy's claim amounted to doubling her present naval position in order to catch up France.

M. Briand had had two conversations with Signor Grandi, and M. Piétri had also talked to him, but Signor Grandi had not reduced his pretensions by a particle: not an inch of ground had been gained.

The Prime Minister said that he had never expressed agreement with the Italian demand for parity.

M. Briand, continuing, said that this was a world Conference, and not a purely European Conference, and yet Italy was seeking to inject into this Conference a question which was purely a Continental one.

M. Tardieu then put the following points. Would we state publicly that we considered that the Italian demand was not justified? As regards the question of discussion on a basis of 400,000 tons for Italy, the French delegation would examine what France's figure would be on this hypothesis. But what would be France's position *vis-à-vis* Great Britain if Italy refused to accept this figure? Would we, in that case, undertake to accept the French figures put forward on February 12? And would this level be considered by the Americans and ourselves?

On the Prime Minister remarking that the original French figures could not be accepted, M. Tardieu stated that it was a pity that the French Government had not been informed sooner of the British figures resulting from the discussions with the Americans.

The Prime Minister explained that, on his instructions, Mr. Craigie had communicated full particulars of our figures and proposals to the Counsellor of the French Embassy so long ago as the early part of September, and since then the French Embassy had been kept fully informed of all developments, including the results of the visit to Washington. The French Government had been asked to give their figures in return, but had not responded.

M. Tardieu said that the French figures were well known, they could be found in the *Statut Naval*. (He was much taken aback by the Prime Minister's statement and was evidently developing an argument on lack of information.)

M. Briand stated that no reproach was either justified or intended so far as Great Britain was concerned. France quite understood the political necessity of our securing an agreement with the United States, and would see no objection to it had we kept to a higher level. In view of the question of equilibrium would it not be possible for us to readjust our figures a little with the United States—in other words to do now what France would have asked us to do if we had approached her first?

The Prime Minister said that in his conversations with President Hoover they had agreed that provided an equilibrium could be secured we could stick to our figures. We had taken the world into our confidence, and could not now be responsible for further increase in our figures.

In the conversations with Mr. Hoover the question which had always been

before them was 'How far would our tentative plans fit in with those of the other naval Powers?' As regards non-signatory Powers, Mr. Hoover and the Prime Minister had thought that there should be a consultative clause which would operate in the event of a non-signatory Power embarking on a programme which would embarrass one of the signatory Powers.

M. Tardieu agreed that no public statement should be made on the following day. He wished, however, to put his two questions again:

- (1) would we say publicly that the Italian demand for parity was not justified?
- (2) would we agree to France retaining her figures of February 12 if an arrangement on the basis of a hypothetical Italian figure were rejected by Italy?

The Prime Minister replied that if we could get an agreement, but Italy remained outside, then we might have to consider a four-Power agreement. He was not, however, prepared to answer M. Tardieu's questions in the affirmative. If the plan of negotiating on a basis of a hypothetical Italian figure were to fail, France would be perfectly entitled to go back to her figures of February 12, but it was no good expecting Great Britain to accept them.

The meeting then adjourned for lunch.

The conversation was continued at 3 p.m.

The Prime Minister suggested that the discussions between the French and ourselves should be on the basis of there being 'No Italy' in the conversations. If there were no movement by Italy, then we might have to face the situation, but first we must see our way to agreement with France. He told M. Tardieu that the British Ambassador at Rome had been notified of the present situation, particularly of the difficulties created by the failure of the Italian delegation to produce a programme, but that he had no instructions to make representations. He understood that the United States Ambassador was similarly being kept informed of the situation. The Prime Minister suggested that, should an agreement be in sight which Signor Grandi's instructions might prevent him from accepting, it might be desirable to take action in Rome, after first discussing the matter with Signor Grandi.

M. Tardieu considered this to be a good suggestion, and said he would arrange for the necessary instructions to be sent to the French Ambassador. Pending the receipt of a reply from Rome, he thought it would not be profitable to continue talks on figures here. He urged the British delegates to consider increasing the British figures. He pointed out that the Italian demand amounted to doubling Italy's naval strength and introduced purely European questions into a Conference which was called to deal with world affairs.

The Prime Minister thought that it would not be desirable that the French Ambassador should join in any representations at Rome, and again made it clear that there could be no question of these representations being made now, but only if a position arose such as he had indicated above. As regards

figures, he deprecated further delay in negotiation, and said that if France had to fall back on her figures and we altered ours, world opinion would receive a great shock.

M. Briand replied that Britain, at all events, would not be blamed for any increase; he added that we must not give the impression of being nearer to agreement than we were.

M. Tardieu then repeated his three suggestions, namely that the following action should be taken simultaneously:

- (1) concerted Anglo-American action at Rome;
- (2) re-examination of the French figures on the basis of a hypothetical Italian figure in the neighbourhood of 400,000 tons;
- (3) examination of the position which would be reached if Italy refused an agreement on the basis of (2) above and France were accordingly obliged to return to her figures of February 12.

(It is to be noted that M. Tardieu repeated these proposals although the Prime Minister had specifically denied the suggestion that he had agreed to representations being made at Rome forthwith, and although the Prime Minister had made it clear that the French figures of February 12 were unacceptable to us.)

#### No. 159

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received March 17)*

*No. 39 Telegraphic [A 2003/1/30]*

ROME, March 16, 1930

Your telegram No. 27.<sup>1</sup>

Difficulty is that for reasons explained in supplement to my private letter of December 22<sup>2</sup> to Mr. Sargent neither I nor my colleagues have any opportunity of keeping touch with Signor Mussolini. His Excellency has disinterested himself from foreign affairs and buried himself in the Ministry of the Interior. He never goes into society and we only see him at rare official functions or on request for special interview. I should have to ask for interview through Minister for Foreign Affairs and it would be obvious that I came on your instructions. This would be open to grave objection mentioned in your telegram that it would look like going over Signor Grandi's head and might do more harm than good.

I could of course impress our point of view on Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs but fear that this would be quite useless for our purposes. On the other hand Signor Mussolini is sometimes open to personal persuasion and I might at least obtain some useful indication from him.

Course I would suggest for your consideration is that you should say to Signor Grandi exactly what you would have me say to Signor Mussolini and induce him if possible to report that whatever his own feelings may be in the matter he is tied by his instructions. You could then ask him whether he sees any objection to me passing on your point of view direct to Signor

<sup>1</sup> No. 157.

<sup>2</sup> This letter cannot be traced in the Foreign Office archives.

Mussolini, and I think he would in all probability welcome the idea. I could then see Signor Mussolini without in any way going over Signor Grandi's head or behind his back.

Italian feeling as reflected in the press and elsewhere has been hitherto quite uncompromising on the subject of parity; but there seems a slight change of tone since yesterday, see my immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

Surmise in penultimate paragraph of your telegram regarding naval elements dominating Italian Delegation is probably correct as regards Burzagli, see paragraph 3 of my private letter December 27 to Mr. Sargent;<sup>2</sup> but I am convinced that Signor Mussolini's attitude is exactly as you describe it and should expect it to be shared by Sirianni and Acton.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

<sup>2</sup> This letter cannot be traced in the Foreign Office archives.

### No. 160

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received March 18)*  
*No. 41 Telegraphic [A 2043/1/45]*

ROME, March 18, 1930

Your telegram No. 27.

My United States colleague has received telegram on very similar lines from his Secretary of State. He came to consult me last night and I informed him of terms of my reply to you with which he expressed entire agreement. I fear anything in the nature of joint Anglo-American *démarche* here with Signor Mussolini would be very unlikely to succeed. It is already being foreshadowed in Italian press and unfortunately in French press that there might be a chance, though I must confess a remote one, of moving Signor Mussolini by something in the nature of a personal appeal from Prime Minister.

According to American information it seems that Italian naval expert Ruspoli is thought to have bad influence on Signor Grandi. He certainly has considerable influence with Signor Grandi but my Naval Attaché who knows him intimately considers it would not be exercised in an undesirable sense.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sir R. Graham was instructed on March 19 not to make an approach to Signor Mussolini.

### No. 161

*Sir J. Tilley (Tokyo) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received March 18)*  
*No. 80 Telegraphic [A 2044/1/45]*

TOKYO, March 18, 1930

Your telegram No. 39.<sup>1</sup>

When I asked for an interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs I was at first told that he would not be free till Wednesday evening but learning

<sup>1</sup> No. 156.

that there was to be a Cabinet this morning Tuesday I made a point of seeing him and did so early this morning.

It was not necessary to quote exact figures but as a matter of fact they are in all the papers in London messages.

I dwelt earnestly upon your [? contention]<sup>1</sup> that opportunity should be seized to reach agreement which was within our grasp, an agreement which after many concessions on the part of the United States and ourselves gave Japan the equivalent of what she had originally asked. The Prime Minister knew how sincerely Japan wanted reduction of armaments and the success of the Conference and counted upon their Government not to lose the chance. There was no more that he himself could do or, he believed, the United States Government either. It was for this reason that I had made a point of seeing him before the meeting of the Cabinet. The Minister for Foreign Affairs said that not only had the Cabinet not yet decided but Naval Experts had not yet given their opinion. I said I hoped that the Government would be prepared to risk [? disregarding]<sup>1</sup> expert opinion and he replied that they would certainly not be altogether guided by it.

What seemed most to disturb him, in view of the necessity for defending any concession Japan might make, was how to explain the objections of Great Britain to the full seventy per cent. I had been here long enough to know that any suggestion of the possibility of war between Great Britain and Japan or of nervousness of Japan in the past of England or even of Australia would make him a laughing stock. He implied what I well knew that, so far as Japanese navy is required for war, potential enemy is the United States, and that is why so much importance attaches to eight inch cruisers; he did not put this into words but of course you are familiar with the idea. On the other hand His Excellency admitted that we must reckon with the . . .<sup>1</sup> spirit in the United States which was a natural one. I urged that we had in fact allowed Japan more than seventy per cent of our big cruiser tonnage showing that we were not influenced by any thought of war with her or any nervousness on the part of Australia which I hoped was now disappearing. Our reasons for wanting a large amount of smaller cruisers were familiar to everybody: and when there was a demand by the United States or Japan for parity with us or a high ratio it must be remembered that we were really six countries some of which might be in trouble at any time: also that our traditions went for a great deal: no one liked climbing down.

He quoted public opinion here. I said that I knew how strong it was; but agreement on suggested ratios was not a natural growth like opinion on . . .<sup>1</sup> or taxes was in all countries, in the United States and even in England; it was the result of expert teaching and the same teaching ought to be able to readjust public opinion. I do not feel so confident of this as I profess to be. I may say here with reference to the first paragraph of your telegram that propaganda not merely by the Japanese authorities but by supporters of Japanese naval party no doubt created definite public opinion as in all other countries but it began before the Conference and has been very effective,

<sup>1</sup> The text here is uncertain.

and dislike or fear of the United States to which I have frequently drawn attention was the material on which it had to work. American opinion is not at all a safe guide in these matters.

I made the most of the postponement by the United States of the last three cruisers: Minister for Foreign Affairs argued that the United States still had the right to build them while Japan in 1935 would only have the right to ask for reconsideration; if she insisted she might break up the agreement; he did not refer to the fact that *Furutakas* have ten years or more of life. Nevertheless I urged this concession making Japan practically secure.

I made it clear to His Excellency that we looked to him to defend the agreement against both the expert advice and public opinion and I think he means to do so. He went so far as to speak of the possibility of having to resign which he did not mind.

I feel I ought to add that public will be inclined, like Minister for Foreign Affairs, to say that we, whom Japan looks on as her friend, have as once before helped to make her give way to United States which is her enemy (the [? word will not be]<sup>1</sup> used so openly). Therefore the less I see of the United States Ambassador the better.

Minister for Foreign Affairs again mentioned French Chargé d'Affaires at whom he merely laughed.

He referred at some length to the possibility of a three-Power treaty and to the French views about submarines but I could not follow him into these matters and said that what I had specially learned from you was the anxiety of His Majesty's Government for the successful conclusion of agreement between Japan and the United States.

<sup>1</sup> The text here is uncertain.

## No. 162

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received March 18)*

*No. 47 Telegraphic [A 2046/1/45]*

BERLIN, March 18, 1930

Secretary of State showed me today a Wolff telegram and a telegram summarising report in 'The Times' of yesterday's date regarding present position of Naval Conference. Both telegrams alluded to question of interdependence between armaments on land and sea and the Wolff telegram even suggested that in order to ensure success of naval disarmament conference Prime Minister would be ready to make concessions to the French in the matter of land disarmament. Question of trained reserves might have been raised in this connexion.<sup>1</sup>

Secretary of State said he had gathered that British and American Governments had declined to extend Kellogg pact in the sense of giving it

<sup>1</sup> Sir H. Rumbold was instructed on March 21 to inform the Secretary of State that these reports were unfounded, and that nothing had been said about trained reserves during the negotiations. Sir H. Rumbold carried out these instructions on March 25.

teeth and that His Majesty's Government had also refused to be a party to any Mediterranean Locarno. He said he did not wish to assume that suppositions in telegrams he had shown me with regard to concessions to the French in the matter of disarmament on land were based on facts but he must admit they had created uneasiness here. He added that German Government had followed proceedings of Naval Conference with close attention. They sincerely hoped that conference would be successful and that it would lead to a real decrease in naval disarmament [*sic*] of the five principal naval Powers. But if success of conference were to be purchased at price of concessions to France with regard, for instance, to trained reserves a new situation would arise and Germany would be seriously disturbed. This question of trained reserves had a special importance for Germany and he could only hope there would be no revival of agreement come to on that subject in 1928 in connexion with abortive Anglo-French naval compromise. German Government had no wish to be stubborn or dogged in the matter of exclusion of trained reserves from calculation of military strength of a country and would be ready to help to save the face of French Government in this question but there could be no real disarmament on land if trained reserves were excluded from calculation of a nation's military strength.

I replied that speaking personally I knew no more about proceedings of Naval Conference than what I had read in the press. It seemed to me however improbable that land disarmament stipulations of abortive Anglo-French naval compromise of 1928 would be revived.

Evening papers contain speculations on this subject, 'Kreuzzeitung' quoting 'Evening News' as stating that France would be prepared to reduce her naval armaments in return for British support of her standpoint on question of land disarmament.

## No. 163

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir J. Tilley (Tokyo)*

*No. 42 Telegraphic [A 2044/1/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 19, 1930*

Your telegram No. 80 (of March 18).<sup>1</sup>

Your language approved.

It is evident that a most determined effort is being made by Japanese naval authorities to reject this compromise and nothing should be left undone to prevent such a disaster occurring. The press refer to the proposed settlement as an 'American proposal'. It is not so. This compromise between conflicting points of view is the result of prolonged negotiations between the three delegations and embodies the farthest concessions to which either we or the Americans feel we can go. I can tell you privately and for your guidance that, according to our information, this arrangement is approved unanimously by the Japanese delegates including Admiral Takarabe. In

<sup>1</sup> No. 161.



considered judgment of our naval experts it gives the Japanese a defensive position which is more than adequate and it increases Japan's naval strength *vis-à-vis* the British Empire. In actual fact Japan only makes one concession, namely, to reduce her submarine fleet from 78,000 (built and building) to 52,700, but even this concession is qualified by securing parity in this arm with the United States and ourselves (compare present United States position of 86,000 built and building and our position of 60,000).

If Japan refuses the present offer, and we fail to reach agreement, all hope of reductions in battlefleet and postponement of battleship construction will go with it. We may be able to conclude an arrangement as to auxiliary tonnage with the United States which will preclude naval competition between the two countries, but so far as Japan is concerned the era of naval competition will recommence.

I think it would be well for you to see the Prime Minister at once as well as Minister for Foreign Affairs. I should, however, add, for your guidance, that I understand that instructions on somewhat similar lines are also being sent to your United States colleague.

#### No. 164

*Mr. R. I. Campbell (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson  
(Received March 20)*

*No. 136 Telegraphic [A 2095/1/45]*

WASHINGTON, March 19, 1930

When talking on other matters yesterday Under Secretary of State brought up the subject of the Naval Conference. He had better news he said. British and United States delegations had agreed on terms of an arrangement with Japan, and Tokyo was being consulted and he thought might agree. Prospect of Anglo-Japanese-American agreement made a [? better]<sup>1</sup> set-up. French would either come in or if not we would have the advantage of knowing where we stood and what sort of a militaristic nation they were. Speaking personally I asked if the Senate and public would receive a tripartite agreement, especially one such as I gathered he foreshadowed, which kept figures at Rapidan level and provided for increases if security of parties were threatened. Would fluidity of the arrangement be objected to by navalists, for instance on the ground that, if we had to make use of conditional clause soon, attainment of parity would be still further postponed? He thought not. Navalists, he considered, were out of the picture. *Bona fide* reduction sentiment in the Senate and country was what had to be taken into account. Navalists might possibly join reductionists but he thought not. Nor did he think a conditional building clause would produce objection from the mass of reductionists. After all great reduction was certain already by scrapping and postponement of replacement of battleships. I asked if this was realised

<sup>1</sup> The text here is uncertain.

in the country as attention had been so much concentrated on cruisers. In fact did the public know (a) what they meant by reduction, whether it was to be from size of United States fleet as it stood, as authorised, or as it might have been failing any agreement and (b) from which of these figures they were justified in expecting reduction? I had seen no statement, recently at any rate, from which they had apparently been able to gain clear idea on this point. He thought reduction resulting from treatment of battleship question undoubtedly was realised but admitted . . .<sup>1</sup> of this undue emphasis given to cruisers. I asked if he feared dangerous attack on tripartite conditional agreement or five-Power agreement at increased limitation level by unscrupulous use of anti-British bias, based on blindness to factors beyond our control which conditioned our figures. Did he think any treaty might be endangered by play being made with possibility that, as our fleet was the measure, American public might only give attention to British navy's size and forget the others on which this depended? I hoped not as it would be a great pity to be brought back thus to the position prior to last summer. He did not think this likely: on the other hand it was true that public could only understand pretty simple ideas.

Mr. Cotton then said he supposed it was essential for the Prime Minister to give British public a treaty. I said I did not know whether they would accept *any* treaty however great their wish for disarmament and economy. Mr. Stimson, he said, was intensely anxious for a treaty and he did hope he would succeed. It would be too bad if he did not.

<sup>1</sup> The text here is uncertain.

## No. 165

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received March 20)*

*No. 45 Telegraphic [A 2124/1/45]*

ROME, March 20, 1930

My telegram No. 44<sup>1</sup> and your telegram No. 30.<sup>2</sup>

My United States colleague with whom I am in close touch and I are impressed with strong feeling aroused here by press reports of impending joint *démarche* on our part with Signor Mussolini. His Excellency is bound to react to this unfortunate publicity especially as it emanates from Paris. Both his attitude and public opinion are stiffened. My colleague and I fear moment has passed if indeed it ever existed for our being able to approach Signor Mussolini on more private and personal line with any hope of success, for an essential feature of any such form of action would have been privacy which is now out of the question. Any action taken now would almost certainly be misconstrued and bring upon the shoulders of Great Britain or United States or both resentment at present felt towards France.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. This telegram summarized Italian press comment on the Naval Conference.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed. This telegram instructed Sir R. Graham not to make an approach to Signor Mussolini. See above, No. 160, note 1.

*Sir J. Tilley (Tokyo) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received March 21)*  
*No. 88 Telegraphic [A 2149/1/45]*

TOKYO, March 21, 1930

Your telegram No. 42<sup>1</sup> of March 19 reached me when United States Ambassador was with me. He had already informed me of his instructions to see Prime Minister and we had agreed that nothing would be gained by such a move. Even if done through Minister for Foreign Affairs it might lead latter to think we had not sufficient confidence in him and this might weaken his support. Moreover Prime Minister not only speaks no English but has practically no communication with foreigners and conversation with him would amount to nothing. United States Ambassador had decided before seeing me to explain this to his Government.

On reading your instructions . . . for . . .<sup>2</sup> was to see Minister for Foreign Affairs and tell him that I wished through him to give a personal [? message from]<sup>3</sup> Mr. Ramsay MacDonald as Prime Minister to Prime Minister of Japan urging him to grasp the opportunity for agreement.

I accordingly saw Minister for Foreign Affairs this morning and read him substance of your telegram omitting sentence about Japanese delegates and comparison of Japanese naval strength with that of British Empire and told him that this was in the nature of a personal message for Prime Minister. He did not suggest as I thought just possible that I should deliver it myself but when I asked him to do so, [? he]<sup>3</sup> seemed to think it good plan although he said that Prime Minister was fully aware of situation and was in agreement with him. He commented on statement that Japan's only concessions would be in regard to submarines to the effect that she was asked to make a much greater concession in respect of her big cruiser claim. I said I took your word to refer to actual reductions.

His Excellency said he hoped that you would not be too pessimistic but situation was a delicate one apart from difficulties raised by . . .<sup>3</sup> scare and he would take some days to deal with it.

If he went too fast it might be . . .<sup>3</sup>. I therefore promised to ask you not to press for an immediate reply. His Excellency observed that newspaper language was much exaggerated.

He told me that United States Ambassador had quoted me as saying that the first additional American ships might be built in 1934. I said that if so it was purely accidental: nothing turned on my reference to these dates and I assumed that both he and Mr. Castle were familiar with actual terms of compromise. From his language I gathered that there were several formulae in existence one containing reservation by Great Britain of her right to revise her programme if Japan did. I told him that I knew nothing of this; I merely had received what I took to be summary of proposed arrangement. [? It

<sup>1</sup> No. 163.

<sup>2</sup> The text here is uncertain, but appears to read: 'I thought the best course for me.'

<sup>3</sup> The text here is uncertain.

seemed]<sup>1</sup> to be in his mind that a postponement of sixteenth cruiser till 1934 might be worth something. He also said that he was wondering whether some formula might be found for stating reservations in such a way as to placate the opposition here. He did not seem to think much of offer to Japan of right to re-assert her claims in 1935; that was obvious and *Furutakas* will not reach age limit for many years after that. I [? suppose]<sup>1</sup> there can be no question of allowing Japan to build another cruiser if and when America builds her seventeenth, for Mr. Castle tells me our standard is due to determination of Australia not to agree to thirteenth Japanese cruiser. Australia's attitude to us here seems absurd, as I have previously observed, and as to reference by our naval experts to Japan's strength *vis-à-vis* the British Empire I may perhaps repeat that Japan does not consider war with the British Empire as imaginable at all.

Referring to French intrigues I told Minister for Foreign Affairs that I had reported to you that he had laughed at them. He said that was quite true.

In conversation with Mr. Castle when he observed that Japan had made no concession, Minister for Foreign Affairs reminded him that after all her main point had been ratio not tonnage. He agreed but said that he meant to hold out for ratio, she should not have been invited unless her claim was allowed.<sup>2</sup>

I saw Genro's<sup>3</sup> secretary yesterday and was to see his chief to-day. I had no opportunity to say more. Although not disposed to talk he told Sir C. Davidson<sup>4</sup> who was also present that he thought there was too much propaganda going on. Minister for Foreign Affairs suggested to Mr. Castle that one of his staff might have talked with [? secretary]<sup>1</sup> who is personal friend of his.

<sup>1</sup> The text here is uncertain.

<sup>2</sup> The text here appears to be corrupt.

<sup>3</sup> Prince Saionji.

<sup>4</sup> Counsellor at H.M. Embassy.

## No. 167

*Sir J. Tilley (Tokyo) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received March 22)*

*No. 91 Telegraphic [A 2166/1/45]*

TOKYO, March 22, 1930

Your telegram No. 44.<sup>1</sup>

Following for Sir R. Vansittart.

French Chargé d'Affaires has on I think two occasions spoken to Minister for Foreign Affairs about submarine question urging Japan to hold out and

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. In this telegram of March 21 Sir J. Tilley was asked to telegraph any further information about suggestions for common action between the French and Japanese Governments on the naval question. On March 21 Mr. Craigie asked M. Massigli whether there was any truth in the reports that, on his own initiative and without instructions, the French Chargé d'Affaires was endeavouring to influence the Japanese Government against the conclusion of an arrangement based on the Anglo-American-Japanese compromise, and particularly against any concession in the matter of submarines. M. Massigli did not

on the second occasion suggesting possibility of French credits as part of the bargain. Minister for Foreign Affairs is inclined to believe these suggestions were made on his own initiative. In any case he had absolutely refused to listen to them. Please do not make any mention of this story as Minister when referring to it yesterday asked me not to repeat what he said.

believe that the Chargé d'Affaires was acting in this way, though he admitted that, before the Conference, 'the French had tried to make common cause with the Japanese in the matter of the submarine, since the interests of both countries on this question appeared to be identical'.

## No. 168

### *Notes of a meeting between representatives of the delegations of the United States of America and the United Kingdom, March 24, 1930<sup>1</sup>*

Present: *United States of America*: Mr. Stimson, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Morrow.  
*United Kingdom*: Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Mr. A. Henderson, Mr. A. V. Alexander, Mr. R. L. Craigie, Mr. M. MacDonald.

Mr. MacDonald said that he had been reviewing the situation with his colleagues mainly from the point of view of the suggested political pacts.

Colonel Stimson said it was largely on that subject that he wished to speak. When the Prime Minister had asked him to come and discuss the critical state of the Conference he and his colleagues on the American Delegation carefully considered the position. He had then realised that there had never been a general discussion on the subject of pacts at which the whole subject could be taken up and their own situation made clear. He thought the time had come when it should be made clear; first, because he did not want to see the door closed without making sure that each understood the other's position, and second, because if the door did close on a Five Power Pact, the moment would come when each would have to make a statement of what happened and, so to speak, write the history of the Conference. If that moment came, the moment when they might have to compare notes in regard to the speeches, he did not want there to be any misunderstanding.

The question of pacts was one of the pivotal points of the Conference. He himself was speaking, not of the British position, but of his own country's standpoint and if he referred to the British position it was only to form a background for what controlled their own position. The historical sequence of events appeared to be somewhat as follows. That morning he had re-read the French Note of December last in which their position at the Conference had been set out. In that Note they had made very clear that what they felt to be the underlying basis was what they called a guarantee of mutual assistance or security in the Mediterranean. They made it perfectly clear on a review of the history of the League of Nations that what they demanded in rough outline was a guarantee of military assistance in the event of an

<sup>1</sup> This meeting was held at 10 Downing St.

aggression in the Mediterranean. That Note was followed very shortly after by the publication of a statement of the British position in which it was said that they could not give such a guarantee, but that they would explore the whole position. Since then the situation had remained that France demanded some such assistance as a condition of security and so far as he understood the matter, such a guarantee could not be granted by the United Kingdom. In that situation the American position was quite clear. No one had ever suggested that France had ever asked the American Government or himself for a guarantee or pact of any kind. There had been an immense propaganda in the press, but no person in authority had ever come to see him in order to ask for a pact. He had had conversations with M. Briand and had explained what his position would be towards a pact and he had understood that M. Briand agreed, but no one had ever tried to alter his position. He had made it clear to the press that America had no policy which was opposed to a consultative pact. They had, in fact, many such pacts. For example, the Washington Disarmament Treaty signed in 1922 itself contained a consultative clause, but all these were consultative pacts without any possibility of an interpretation in favour of military security or any assistance over and above consultation. Under the position that now existed France was asking for a Mediterranean Pact in return for a reduction of tonnage as compared with their present programme. Supposing in these circumstances America entered into a pact which on its face was consultative. France might some day say 'In 1930 this Pact was worth such and such a number of cruisers and submarines, why is it not worth the same to-day?' And America would then find herself in the same position as Sir Edward Grey found himself in 1914 when France had re-distributed her fleet and was able to say that her North Coast was unprotected. Consequently, the American Delegation had been able to take up no position other than to say that any pact concluded in such conditions would be rejected by the people and the Senate. That position was confirmed by what was said by members of the French Delegation itself in private conversations with members of his own Delegation. They said that they did not desire a consultative pact, but they wanted to know where they stood in regard to assistance and protection which alone could enable them to lower their tonnage. He thought that was the position that all present understood. He wished, however, to make his position perfectly clear without in any way seeking to influence the position of the United Kingdom Delegation. It was this; if the time came when the French demand for security and a settlement of the Mediterranean position was in some way met by the action of other Powers, a settlement in which the United States were not in a position to participate; if after such settlement the question of a *Consultative* Pact came up, the United States would be prepared to consider it with an open mind. That was a point which he wished the United Kingdom Delegation to realise. They could not go further without intruding into matters in which they were not concerned because what France wanted was British assistance and on that he could offer no observations.

Mr. MacDonald said that in regard to the first part of Colonel Stimson's

statement, he thought Colonel Stimson had already again and again made his position absolutely clear. On the question of what could be done if there were a Mediterranean agreement, he was very glad to hear what Colonel Stimson had said. He had always thought that that was their position, but he had refrained from asking Colonel Stimson. Nevertheless, he had felt that that would be the American view if it should become practicable. The present position was that no proposal for a pact had been put officially to the British Delegation. He himself, as Chairman of the Conference, had been thinking over the question of a Pact and had, so to speak, put his thinking in writing. On Wednesday,<sup>1</sup> at dinner with M. Briand, the question of political pacts had been raised and he himself had made it quite clear to M. Briand that it was quite impossible to add to our military commitments. If France wanted, as he suspected they did, a military alliance, we could not agree. He had indicated informally, however, that we would co-operate in any practical and effective way for strengthening the machinery for keeping the peace so that no war could come. And if war did come, we should stand by our obligations under Article XVI of the League Covenant. The French Government were understood to hold some doubts as to what we meant by that. They seemed to think that, after the British representative at the Council had voted in favour of sanctions under Article XVI, in spite of that vote the British Government might turn away and consider it had the right to decide whether such a vote was effective or not. In past history there might have been complaints against Great Britain, but he did not believe that anyone could now think that Great Britain would not honour its engagements. They had accepted Article XVI of the Covenant. Before it could be put into effect there must be a unanimous vote by the Council, of which Great Britain was a permanent member. France said 'But the naval, military, and air sanctions are only a recommendation of the Council and you might not be willing to act thereon'. In this matter Great Britain was faced with two kinds of difficulties. In a cautious way, he had pointed out these difficulties to President Hoover and Colonel Stimson at Rapidan. For example, such difficulties might arise in the enforcement of economic sanctions automatically against a declared aggressor. Supposing as a result a blockade was declared, under the authority of the League of Nations, against State A. in the Mediterranean. We had never overlooked the fact that America might object and an American citizen might protest if he were stopped from importing some goods that were not necessarily munitions of war.

Colonel Stimson interpolated that under modern conditions nearly everything could be construed as munitions of war.

Mr. MacDonald, continuing, said that in that event he might receive a note from the American Secretary of State to say 'Hands off that cargo'. That was one of the dangers that was not overlooked. The other was that, in considering the application of naval, military, and air sanctions under Article XVI of the Covenant, the French, with their logical minds, might

<sup>1</sup> March 19.

argue that a recommendation by the Council was not a decision. However, in the discussions with the United Kingdom Delegation that morning, he had his attention drawn to the following explanation regarding Article XVI of the Covenant which had been given to Germany by the Powers signatory to the Locarno Treaty on October 16th, 1925:

‘The German Delegation has requested certain explanations in regard to article 16 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

‘We are not in a position to speak in the name of the League, but in view of the discussions which have already taken place in the Assembly and in the Commissions of the League of Nations, and after the explanations which have been exchanged between ourselves, we do not hesitate to inform you of the interpretation which, in so far as we are concerned, we place upon article 16.

‘In accordance with that interpretation the obligations resulting from the said article on the members of the League must be understood to mean that each State member of the League is bound to co-operate loyally and effectively in support of the Covenant and in resistance to any act of aggression to an extent which is compatible with its military situation and takes its geographical position into account.’

Mr. Dwight Morrow asked if that was Annex F. to the Locarno Treaty.

Mr. MacDonald said it was and that it had been initialled by all concerned. How that could be interpreted to mean that, after its representative had voted in favour of sanctions, a State still was not bound, he could not understand, for it was stated clearly that a State *‘is bound to co-operate loyally and effectively’*. If the French wanted a reaffirmation of that, they could get it, but he could not see his way to give an undertaking which would result, independently of the merits of the dispute, in the British Fleet being drawn in. So it looked as if a strong reinforcement of the Kellogg Pact and of the international machinery might be possible, provided that France was willing to accept a reaffirmation of Annex F., which he had read, as sufficient. He had also made it clear to the French that we could not make a Mediterranean Agreement with France and Italy at this Conference, because a pledge had been given to Spain that such an Agreement would not be settled at the present Conference, although we were willing to attend a subsequent Conference of Mediterranean Powers.

Senator Robinson asked if France had asked for a Mediterranean Pact.

Mr. MacDonald said that France had never made a definite proposal except (as he was reminded by Mr. Craigie) a proposal put forward by M. Massigli informally at first, though subsequently he had said it could be regarded as representing the mind of the French Delegation.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Henderson recalled that at an early stage of the Conference it had been arranged that this subject should be remitted for discussion in the first instance between M. Briand and himself. They had only had one conversation on the subject, namely about a fortnight ago.

Senator Robinson said he had only raised the point in order to make it

<sup>1</sup> The reference appears to be to No. 151.



clear that there was an arrangement between certain Powers at this Conference with Powers outside the Conference that the question would not be settled here.

Mr. Henderson said this was the case. He explained the undertaking that had been given to the Spanish Ambassador that no Mediterranean Agreement would be entered into at this Conference. He pointed out, however, that it would be possible to make clear our willingness to take up the question at a later Conference.

Mr. MacDonald said that the Spanish Ambassador had come to him long before the Conference and had explained that he wanted to be quite clear that no Mediterranean Agreement would be entered into at the Conference since Spain was interested; also, that they must not be asked at some later stage to come and sit on some sub-committee of the Conference to consider the question.

Mr. Henderson said that the French had given a similar undertaking. The Spanish Ambassador had said that if this question was to be raised Spain must be in the Conference from the beginning.

Mr. MacDonald said that M. Massigli had first handed in his draft as a personal suggestion. Later on he had said 'the draft is my own, but you may take it that it represents the mind of the French Delegation'. He asked Mr. Craigie to confirm this.

Mr. Craigie said that after the French Cabinet crisis, when M. Massigli came back from Paris he had proposed a draft relating to the Mediterranean. Its operation was based upon Article 16 of the Covenant. He then read the operative clause of the draft. In putting that forward M. Massigli had said that it was most important that it should not leak out so he did not hand it in in the form of a communication from Delegation to Delegation, but as a personal communication. Mr. Craigie had then told him that he thought there was no chance of its acceptance and had passed it on to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State (Mr. Henderson). He did not think that the French Delegation had any idea of producing the draft in this Conference, but that it was devised merely as an indication of what would be agreed to later on. M. Massigli had told him later on that while the draft must still remain secret and confidential, it might now be taken as representing the views of the French Delegation. They could not put it forward officially as they did not want to appear as beggars at the Conference, and as they were not encouraged to believe it was acceptable, they would not pursue the matter.

Senator Robinson asked whether there was any discussion as to whether a Mediterranean clause should be dealt with at the present Conference.

Mr. Craigie said that the trend was merely an exchange of views as to what would be done if a Mediterranean Conference were held subsequent to the present Conference. It was not at all in his mind that there had been any idea of a Mediterranean agreement to be concluded at the present Conference.

Mr. MacDonald asked if M. Massigli had proposed to include among the High Contracting Powers all the Mediterranean States.

Mr. Craigie said that in their conversation he had referred to Spain as a Power which must be included. He himself had mentioned the large number of Powers that would be concerned and M. Massigli had then suggested that it might be limited to the Western Mediterranean.

Mr. MacDonald pointed out that such a Pact would rule out Cyprus and Palestine. Those were the main facts of the situation. He had handed M. Briand a draft of a general introduction to the Treaty (Appendix) that he himself had prepared and which he read, but he had handed it simply as Chairman of the Conference and not on behalf of the British Delegation. He feared, however, that it would not satisfy the French.

After some discussion in regard to the difficulties at the Conference between the French and Italian Delegations, Mr. MacDonald expressed the hope that M. Briand would come over and take this matter up. Up to the present time the French had made no reply to his own reply to the French proposal. As soon as he himself returned from America he had seen the French and Italian Ambassadors and offered his good offices. The Italians had told him that the French would not reply to their Notes and the French made the same complaint about the Italians. The Italian Ambassador at that time had gone to Rome for three weeks promising to report on return, but he never had reported to him. The French Ambassador had gone to Paris promising to report on return, but he had nothing to report.

Mr. Dwight Morrow asked if the undertaking contained in Annex 'F' to the Locarno Treaty had yet been made to the French.

Mr. MacDonald said it had not been made as yet as it had only been under consideration that morning, but the proposal would be made.

Colonel Stimson asked whether anyone in Paris had made a concrete suggestion as to what they would be willing to do if they were given a Pact.

Mr. Craigie said that no such suggestion had been made. When the French proposal for a Pact had been received he himself had known that it would not be acceptable to the British Government. The French officials had admitted that if accepted it would result in a considerable reduction in their programme, but he could hardly ask them what that reduction would be without encouraging them to think that the Pact was acceptable.

Colonel Stimson pointed out that unless the French Government were willing as a response to a Pact to reduce down to the same level as Italy, it would be necessary to find out what Italy would do.

Mr. Craigie pointed out that the Italians had made clear that they would not go beyond the margin of parity already indicated.

Colonel Stimson pointed out that the French had always suggested that they must have a larger annual construction programme than that of Italy. The Italians had always maintained that if France was allowed to build faster than they, this would be tantamount to an abandonment of parity. He did not see, therefore, how any advance was to be made unless either France would give up her claim to superiority in building, or Italy would give up her claim to parity.

Mr. Craigie suggested that perhaps France might be content to maintain

her present lead of 250,000 tons in built and building: but the Italians maintained that the lead must be reduced to 140,000 tons.

Colonel Stimson asked if this was old tonnage.

Mr. Craigie said that 100,000 tons was battleship tonnage and the other 40,000 tons of over-age cruiser tonnage. He thought they might move beyond that point.

Colonel Stimson said that his difficulty was that Italy had something approaching parity in modern cruisers and destroyers, but not in submarines, and France wanted to increase her lead in this respect.

Mr. Dwight Morrow asked if Mr. Craigie's idea was that France would be content to maintain the present relative position and build ton for ton.

Mr. Craigie pointed out that in order to keep the lead France would have to build more.

Mr. Dwight Morrow said he had gathered from members of the Italian Delegation that Italy did not mind France keeping old tonnage. What they objected to was that such tonnage should be replaced. They wanted, in the event of replacement, to have the right to build ton for ton.

Colonel Stimson said he had understood that France would insist on a higher level of building than Italy, whereas Italy would not take less than parity in building.

Mr. MacDonald said he had asked Signor Grandi to consider whether it would be possible for him to accept the *status quo*. In doing so he had agreed that Italy might cavil as to exactly what was the *status quo*, but had suggested that beyond that Italy should only replace in a certain proportion.

Mr. Craigie said he had pointed out to Signor Rosso that the *status quo* might mean either vessels built only, or vessels built and building, and Signor Rosso had agreed that that made a difference.

Mr. MacDonald said that perhaps the position was a little more fluid than it had been a week ago.

Mr. Henderson said he wanted to be a little clearer as to what Colonel Stimson had said. Was he right in his understanding that, in the event of our being able to come to some agreement with France in regard to the Mediterranean, America might then be willing to consider a Consultative Agreement?

Colonel Stimson said that their consultations had taken place under the shadow of the French desire for security. What he had said was that if that shadow no longer existed, for the reason that France had obtained security in some other way and from Powers other than the United States, then, in the light of that new position, French security being out of the way, if the United States were asked for a Consultative Pact they would take it into consideration. Furthermore, in the discussions within their own Delegation, where their minds were naturally working towards making such a Consultative Pact safe for them, French security demands being satisfied in some other way, it had been mooted that the Consultative Pact should, on its face, exclude military assistance.

Mr. Henderson asked, therefore, whether, supposing it were possible to find some arrangement to satisfy France which would enable a Mediter-

anean Conference to be entered into, the American Delegation would be willing to put their idea into the preamble of the Agreement arising out of the present Conference?

Colonel Stimson said they would have to hesitate unless France was already assured on the question of security. Otherwise the French might say afterwards that the real thing that had brought them into the Agreement was the Consultative Pact.

Mr. Henderson pointed out that he had begun by making the supposition that the French were satisfied, as well as the second supposition that it was possible to pass on to a Mediterranean Conference.

Colonel Stimson thought that Mr. Henderson had presented the situation fairly. He himself had felt it necessary to speak with meticulous caution, in order that there might be no possibility of misunderstanding.

Mr. MacDonald said that the difficulty was how to approach the question with any possibility of success.

Colonel Stimson said the point he felt the most doubtful about was whether France could give a *quid pro quo* in the matter of disarmament.

Mr. MacDonald said that the real difficulty was the Italian parity. He wanted to emphasise that the Agreement was for six years and that the principle of parity would not be affected. That was the point he had already emphasised to Signor Grandi.

After some discussion on the subject of the negotiations with the Japanese Delegation, in regard to which no reply had yet been received from Japan, Mr. MacDonald said he would like Colonel Stimson and his colleagues to consider the future handling of the Conference if, in spite of all efforts, it was found impossible to arrive at a Five-Power Agreement. Should there be a Three-Power Pact, assuming Japanese acceptance of the proposals? If so, what form should it take? He asked that it should be borne in mind that, after the American and Japanese Delegations had gone home to the other end of the world, the United Kingdom remained and had to consider its position in Europe. The susceptibilities of the French had to be taken into consideration. He was concerned about the long time that was being occupied in the negotiations with France and Italy. He himself proposed to see Signor Grandi that afternoon and he would impress upon him once more that this was only a temporary agreement which could be accepted without any sacrifice of principle, and would appeal for him to make a contribution to the pool of goodwill. He felt that that was the best line for anyone seeing the Italian Delegation.

Senator Robinson suggested that, if a Three-Power Agreement were arrived at, an adjournment might be made in order to give the French and Italians time also to reach agreement. The whole position would then be clear to the world.

Mr. MacDonald thought that if a Three-Power Agreement were reached, the best plan would be to set it out in a document which could be signed, but ratification withheld. Then the Three Powers would be in a position to say—this is the agreement that we tried to get. Then there might be an

adjournment. A communication might then be made to Paris and Rome, with a view to reaching an agreement which would fit in with the Three-Power draft. London, Paris and Rome would continue negotiations while the Three-Power Agreement was kept in a pigeon-hole as the standard document to which those negotiations would conform.

Colonel Stimson said the agreement would be an earnest of the intentions aimed at. He thought, before long it would be necessary to have a public plenary meeting at which the whole position would be set out. First, however, it was necessary to hear from Japan. If it were then possible to say that the three largest Naval Powers were in agreement, that alone should change the world situation.

Senator Robinson suggested that it would focalise such public opinion as may exist and make impossible the ruptures that had threatened the Conference.

Mr. Dwight Morrow pointed out that there might be some embarrassment in America in pigeon-holing the agreement and referring it to Geneva.

Colonel Stimson said he understood Mr. MacDonald had contemplated signing the agreement.

Mr. Dwight Morrow suggested that the agreement might be drawn up in an expansible form.

Colonel Stimson thought, of course, the agreement could be drawn in such a way as to allow other parties to adhere. The trouble was, however, that their programme might upset the programmes agreed to.

#### APPENDIX

##### *Prime Minister's Draft of a General Introduction to the Treaty, handed by him to M. Briand*

The High Contracting Parties solemnly reaffirm the pledges they have given to renounce war as an instrument in national policy and to maintain a state of peace between themselves and they declare that in the event of any dispute arising between them which they cannot resolve themselves, they shall bind themselves to co-operate with each other to find means through existing agencies or by special use of their good offices by which the dispute may be settled without recourse to war.

In the full assurance that this pledge will be effective in maintaining peaceful relations between them, and as a step towards naval disarmament and an assistance to the solution of the difficulties confronting the Preparatory Commission of Geneva, the High Contracting Parties affix their signatures, etc. etc.

#### No. 169

##### *Record of an interview between Mr. MacDonald and Signor Grandi, March 24, 1930<sup>1</sup>*

The Prime Minister began by referring to a tentative proposal which had been submitted privately to Signor Grandi in the course of the preceding

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Craigie and Signor Rosso were also present.

week, and of which a copy is attached.<sup>1</sup> (The suggestion at the earlier meeting was that Signor Grandi might, as a contribution to the success of the Conference, either adopt as his own this proposal for the maintenance of the *status quo* or else indicate the probability of his being able to accept it if the Prime Minister put it forward officially.) The Prime Minister said he had heard from Mr. Craigie that Signor Grandi felt that he could not agree to the course proposed. This was a great disappointment to the Prime Minister as, unless some move could be made from the Italian side, it was difficult to see how any improvement in the Franco-Italian position could be expected. The essence of the proposal was that the principle of the Italian claim to parity should remain intact and Italy would be as free to reaffirm her claim to parity in 1935 as she is to-day.

Signor Grandi replied that he feared it was quite impossible for him to make any move of this description. He had already had intimations that in Rome he was considered to have gone too far in suggesting the idea of continuing the *status quo* with France in *overage* tonnage, and he felt that any extension of the principle so as to include a certain amount of underage tonnage would be quite impossible. The recent declaration of the Fascist Council, whose views he was bound to consider even more carefully than the views of the Italian Government itself, contained, he thought, a veiled admonition against himself for having gone as far as he had. Signor Grandi felt that the Franco-Italian situation had now hardened to such an extent that no progress was likely to be achieved at the present Conference. He had been wondering whether, when the right time came, the best course would not be to proceed with a three-Power agreement and then to adjourn the Conference for six months, during which time he hoped it might be possible to bring about an improvement in Franco-Italian relations and a consequent easing up of the naval situation. His idea was that the Conference should remain in being under Mr. MacDonald's chairmanship and that the form of the three-Power agreement should be such as to render it relatively easy for Italy and France to accede to it at a later date.

The Prime Minister said that he was sorry to hear Signor Grandi speak in so pessimistic a vein; he himself was still hopeful of bringing about a five-Power agreement at this Conference, and he thought that any premature talk of an adjournment might be inopportune. Moreover, experience showed that the adjournment of a conference of this importance and delicacy led not to a *détente* but to a hardening of national positions. But, if all else failed, he certainly thought that Signor Grandi's idea should receive very careful consideration.

A general discussion ensued which ranged over the whole ground covered by the Conference. The Prime Minister impressed upon Signor Grandi some of the difficulties and disabilities under which Italy would labour if the present Conference were to be a failure, and he urged Signor Grandi to take his courage in both hands and make some further contribution to the success of the Conference before it was too late. Signor Grandi was clearly

<sup>1</sup> See appendix.

impressed by the Prime Minister's picture of the difficulties confronting Italy in the event of a complete breakdown here, but he could hold out no hope of Italy's being able to adopt a more constructive policy at the Conference than that hitherto followed.

The conversation lasted for about two hours.

#### APPENDIX

##### *Suggestions unofficial and purely tentative (not agreed by any Delegation)*

Italy might draft a memorandum stating:

- (a) that this offer is made so as to facilitate the work of the Conference and give the world a chance of escaping from the calamity of rival naval building;
- (b) that at Washington you [*sic*] secured parity in battleships and asserted your [*sic*] claim to parity in auxiliary fleets as a whole;
- (c) that Italy holds to this and that no agreement come to here must be taken in any way to be a departure from it;
- (d) that for the period during which this agreement is to run: viz: until 31st December 1936, as a basis of discussion Italy will agree to maintain the *status quo*;
- (e) that during this period all building undertaken by the two countries in auxiliary ships shall be of the nature of replacement tonnage and what new ships are built shall be in the categories set forth by the Powers in the programmes embodied in, or annexed to, the agreement, so that the total category tonnage set out in the agreement shall not be exceeded at the end of the period;
- (f) that this right of replacement should be limited to a proportion of over-age tonnage to be included in the global tonnage mentioned in section (d) which shall be adjusted to the programmes of the three Powers represented at the Conference.
- (g) that Italy reserves the right to retain its liberty to bring to the 1935 Conference its claim unimpaired by any agreement made at the London Conference or by any building undertaking in the interval.

*March 19, 1930*

#### No. 170

*Record of a conversation between Mr. A. Henderson and M. Briand,  
March 27, 1930<sup>1</sup>*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 27, 1930*

Mr. Henderson said that suggestions were current to the effect that the Conference had failed. He did not believe for a minute that the Conference

<sup>1</sup> Sir R. Vansittart, Mr. Malkin, Mr. Selby, M. de Fleuriau, and M. Massigli were also present.

had failed or would fail. He had read M. Briand's speech<sup>1</sup> in the Senate which had been reported in the press and it had inspired a fresh hope that if they could only get together it would be possible to achieve an accommodation with the French Government.

M. Briand said that his speech in the Senate was directly designed to assist the Conference and to prove that France was not disinterested in its fate. He had been pleased to observe that the public at large in France as well as the Assembly had approved his declaration.

Mr. Henderson reminded M. Briand that a fortnight ago he had had a talk with him at the Carlton which had been succeeded by a visit to Chequers and a discussion with the Prime Minister. A formula had subsequently been handed to M. Massigli on which M. Briand had not yet furnished his observations.

M. Briand said that he was not anxious to put forward another formula until he had some clearer indication as to the exact position of His Majesty's Government. His own feeling was that a solution lay in a clearer indication as regards the application of Article 16 and M. Massigli had already submitted a formula to Mr. Craigie which embodied the general views of the French Government. M. Briand observed that it might be possible to use a new formula to indicate the application of Article 16. If that was Mr. Henderson's view, he himself was quite ready to work on that basis.

Mr. Henderson said that there would be no difficulty in finding the interpretation of the obligations incumbent upon the respective governments in the discussions which took place at Geneva at the time the Protocol was drafted. He said he pointed out at that time that the proposal of Denmark to disarm completely would make it impossible for that country to carry out its obligations under Article 16. It was his view that every State Member of the League must loyally and effectively take the necessary steps to punish the aggressor and he was of opinion that he would experience no difficulty in inducing His Majesty's Government to say that that was their interpretation of their obligations under Article 16.

M. Massigli said that Mr. Henderson had spoken of 1924. He must remember that in the meantime there had been the repudiation of the Protocol by His Majesty's Government, while at Locarno a distinction had been drawn between the obligations of His Majesty's Government as regards the eastern and western frontiers of Germany. In 1927 His Majesty's

<sup>1</sup> This speech was made on March 25. Lord Tyrrell had reported on March 25 that M. Briand's speech was intended to show (i) that the French Government would view the failure of the Conference with as much concern as His Majesty's Government, (ii) that they would do everything in their power to avert such failure, (iii) that, if His Majesty's Government would enable French public opinion to feel that war in the Mediterranean had been made impossible, the French Government would be able and willing to take account of the difficulties of His Majesty's Government in the matter of commitments. Lord Tyrrell concluded his telegram as follows: 'I cannot too strongly emphasize that in the mind of the French Government *what is at issue is not the question of the use of military force against the aggressor, but that of an undertaking to prevent war and thus make the use of force impossible and unnecessary.*'



Government had submitted a memorandum to the Committee of Arbitration and Security referring to the resolutions of 1921 as regards Article 16 which in the view of the French Government involved derogations from the sanctions which that Article should in certain contingencies, in the view of the French Government, impose as regards an aggressor State.

Mr. Henderson enquired of M. Briand whether he remembered the reply given to Germany in the Locarno Treaties as regards the application of Article 16; an undertaking to which both the British and French representatives had subscribed.

M. Briand said it was clearly in his mind, but that he would draw attention to the fact that that formula had been used in that particular case to reassure Germany as regards her position in the event of a state of war arising with say Soviet Russia and was designed to take account of the state of Germany's disarmament. It was a diminution of Germany's obligations under Article 16 and was the exact opposite of the attitude which, in a given contingency and particularly that at present under consideration, the French Government would desire His Majesty's Government to adopt.

M. Briand said that he was particularly anxious not to put His Majesty's Government in an impossible position as they did not wish to propose to go further in the matter of the elaboration of formulae than His Majesty's Government felt they were able to go. He particularly wished to make the ground easy for His Majesty's Government. What he had in mind was an instrument of mutual assurance not directed against any particular Power and nothing which would resemble in any sense the old alliances or pacts of pre-war days. M. Briand said that he felt sure that if such a pact came into existence the effect would be that the danger of war would disappear altogether.

Mr. Henderson said that it seemed to him that what the French Government were aiming at was an assurance that His Majesty's Government would carry out loyally their obligations under Article 16. If His Majesty's Government were prepared to put their name to a document to undertake to make their contribution to carry out effectively the obligations of Article 16, that was surely what France had been asking throughout the Conference.

M. Briand said that he would have liked to say something to the effect that they did not admit that war could break out; if a dispute arose it must be settled by juridical means and lastly that if any Power violated these conditions there should be agreement to take measures to prevent the aggression. The great majority of the Powers, including Great Britain, wished to maintain the right to interpret the sanctions which would devolve upon them as the result of the application of Article 16 in their own way and lay down their own conditions.

Mr. Henderson said that if an agreement could be reached to carry out loyally and effectively the unanimous decision of the Council which should determine what contribution each State should make, that should be sufficient to meet the point. It was plain that they were in agreement on the first two points of M. Briand's proposal in regard to which no difficulty

need arise. In regard to the last point, namely the particular degree of responsibilities deriving from Article 16 on individual Powers, he felt sure that there should be no difficulty in finding a formula which would give the French Government satisfaction.

Sir R. Vansittart observed that the position seemed to him to be that M. Massigli had presented a draft which had seemed to His Majesty's Government excessive, and Mr. Craigie, on the instructions of the Prime Minister had presented a counter-draft which M. Briand had described as insufficient. Would it not be the right thing for M. Briand now to submit a counter-proposal?

M. Briand said that the discussions in the endeavour to find a formula could be regarded as entirely unofficial. Would it be possible for Mr. Henderson to submit a formula interpreting the indications which he had given in the course of his observations that morning? He felt sure that on such a basis agreement could be found.

Mr. Henderson thought that time would be saved if M. Massigli and Mr. Malkin representing the respective points of view should produce a joint formula.

It was finally agreed that M. Massigli and Mr. Malkin should meet with a view to endeavouring to find a formula on the basis of the discussion which had taken place between Mr. Henderson and M. Briand, and that a further meeting should take place between Mr. Henderson and M. Briand as soon as M. Massigli and Mr. Malkin were in a position to produce the desired draft.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> After discussions had taken place over this draft, M. Briand went to Paris on April 5 in order to lay the plan before the French Government. On M. Briand's return a further meeting was held with the British representatives. For this meeting, and for the final text of the draft, see No. 181.

## No. 171

*Sir J. Tilley (Tokyo) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received March 27, 1930)*  
*No. 96 Telegraphic [A 2277/1/45]*

TOKYO, March 27, 1930

Vice-Minister of Marine lunched here today. He was very friendly and assured me that they were doing their best to allay feeling and I must not be pessimistic. Answer would probably be delayed for a few days. Of course I knew that they did not take England into their calculations at all. I said I knew that well but I did not believe that America's naval policy was dictated by any sort of disagreeable intentions and we must all accommodate ourselves to circumstances.

The above is only for your own information.

I saw United States Ambassador last night. He was quite hopeful.

No. 172

*Letter from the Spanish Ambassador to Mr. A. Henderson (Received  
March 31)*

No. 65 [A 2343/8/45]

Sir,

SPANISH EMBASSY, LONDON, *March 31, 1930*

The Government of His Majesty the King, My august Sovereign, who are following with a natural interest the course of the labours of the Naval Conference in London, observe that of late progress appears to have been made towards solutions which would without doubt affect the Mediterranean question. No authorised communication has reached the Government of His Catholic Majesty which enables them to make any affirmation on the subject, but the rumours which exist and the impressions which are in circulation impel them to confirm the contents of the memorandum which the undersigned communicated to His Britannic Majesty's Foreign Office on the 30th December last,<sup>1</sup> and in which it was, *inter alia*, stated that 'they could only regard with profound displeasure the discussion, in their absence, at the said conference or elsewhere, of the Mediterranean problem in any of its aspects. They are confident that if the other States directly interested in that concrete problem wish to raise the matter, they will not do so without relying from the outset, and as a matter of the highest importance, on the collaboration of the Spanish Government'. In their reply of the 17th January, His Britannic Majesty's Government declared that 'no formal deliberations and certainly no decisions in regard to a political problem of such importance could take place without full consultation with all the Mediterranean Powers' concerned'. While it did not appear probable that the labours of the Naval Conference would affect the problem of the Mediterranean the Spanish Government refrained from emphasising the matter. In doing so now they must also recall the British reply and reiterate the affirmation of the right of the Spanish Government to participate from the outset in any discussion that might affect the problem in question.

I have etc.,

MARQUÉS MERRY DEL VAL

<sup>1</sup> No. 128.

No. 173

*Sir J. Tilley (Tokyo) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received April 1)*

No. 102 *Telegraphic* [A 2361/1/45]

My telegram No. 101.<sup>1</sup>

TOKYO, *April 1, 1930*

Previous to receiving your telegram<sup>2</sup> I had sent to ask Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs about the situation. His answer confirms my report that instructions to delegates will probably only make reservations about details,

<sup>1</sup> This telegram (not printed) reported that the Japanese reply would probably be sent on April 1 or 2.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. a telegram asking when the Japanese reply might be expected.

in particular maintenance of dockyard capacity to construct submarines and as to reserving freedom of action at next conference.

Delay has been due to necessity for giving careful consideration to naval views and of preparing public opinion.

Latter of course was very important.

## No. 174

*Note by Mr. Craigie of a conversation with M. Massigli, April 1, 1930*

As the Prime Minister was anxious that the negotiations in regard to a political declaration should not get too far before we had some idea as to what the French were likely to give for it in terms of tonnage, I discussed this matter with M. Massigli this morning.

I began by reminding M. Massigli that in all our previous talks the one thing that had seemed to preoccupy him was the alleged difference of interpretation of Article 16 of the Covenant of the League. As a result of the conversations with the Foreign Office a text had been prepared which seemed to me to meet the French view very fully. The only point on which we had not been able to meet the French delegation related to the putting into force as between the signatories of the proposed declaration of the amendments to Articles 12, 13 and 15 now under discussion by the League. The objections to this course seemed so overwhelming that I thought the French delegation themselves appreciated them. In any event, under the proposed wording the situation would be rectified within a year or a couple of years at the utmost and I presumed that France was not expecting a serious threat of war within that period!

M. Massigli did not dissent from any of the above arguments, and I then asked how much, in his view, the proposed political declaration would facilitate a settlement on the question of figures.

M. Massigli agreed that it was now time to consider the bearing of this question on the figures, and asked me whether I could give him an indication of the highest French figures which we should be able to accept.

I replied that it would perhaps be undesirable that I should repeat any British figure at this time since, on my present instructions, these figures must inevitably be very low. Would not the best way be for the French delegation now to consider the matter in all its bearings, to take account of the maximum which they now knew we could offer in the political field, the prospects of our being able to secure some form of consultative agreement with the United States, and finally the arguments which had been put forward from our side for a reduction of the French figures, and then to quote to us either officially or unofficially, the lowest figures in the various categories to which they felt they could go? We would then consider these figures with every desire to reach an agreement. Should the gap still be too great, there would be nothing left but that we should agree to defer a settlement as between ourselves until a later (but not a remote) date, and meanwhile proceed with a three-Power agreement. I added that the indications from Japan were

that the Japanese Government would before long accept the compromise arrangement which had been reached in London, and it would then be necessary to proceed without further delay either to a three-Power or a five-Power agreement. It remained our most earnest hope that a five-Power agreement would be achieved.

M. Massigli said he would like to think the matter over, but added that, even if the truth of what I had said were to be admitted, there still remained the Italian difficulty, and it was extremely dangerous for France to put forward a lower figure as long as the Italian situation remained undefined.

I then outlined various ways in which, in my personal view, it might be possible to solve the Italian difficulty without loss of prestige in any quarter, but I drew attention to some of the dangers of a four-Power treaty from which Italy would be absent.

M. Massigli intervened to say that if we excluded a four-Power treaty *a priori* it would be exceedingly difficult for progress to be made, but I reminded him that all I had done up to the present was to point out the dangers and difficulties of a four-Power agreement, since those risks applied to France every bit as much as they did to us. In this latter statement M. Massigli concurred.

Finally M. Massigli reminded me that in the early stages of the Conference we had had a private and personal talk on certain questions such as the limitation of material of war and of land effectives. He felt it would be important that if the French delegation were to meet us on the matter of figures, there should be some understanding between us in regard to the future course of events at Geneva. I said I could only express my personal opinion that private conversations on these points (which should of course be quite distinct from the Conference itself) could not but be useful in preparing the ground for Geneva, but M. Massigli asked me whether I was not in a position to give more than my personal opinion on this point. I replied that I could not bind the delegation in any way, but that I did not think there would be any objection on our side to discussing informally and confidentially what would be the best way of bringing about a satisfactory solution by the Preparatory Commission of the limitation of land material of war and of land effectives. Clearly, any such discussions would be greatly facilitated if we had meanwhile reached an amicable agreement on the limitation of naval armaments.

R. L. CRAIGIE.

## No. 175

*Notes of a meeting of representatives of the delegations of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and Japan, April 2, 1930<sup>1</sup>*

Present: *United States of America*: Mr. Stimson, Mr. Reed.

*United Kingdom*: Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Mr. A. V. Alexander, Mr. R.

L. Craigie, Captain R. M. Bellairs, Mr. M. MacDonald.

*Japan*: Mr. Reijiro Wakatsuki, Mr. Hiroshi Saito.

<sup>1</sup> This meeting was held at St. James's Palace.

Mr. Wakatsuki recalled that the Japanese Delegation had been in consultation with the United Kingdom and United States Delegations and that from these consultations a plan had emerged. He had reserved his final acceptance, but, since the plan was the result of long examination between the three Delegations, he had decided to send it to the Japanese Government for consideration. He had hoped for an earlier reply but, owing to the political conditions under which the Japanese system of Government was working, there had been some delay and he had only received the reply on the previous day. That reply he proposed to submit in full. First, however, he wanted to make sure that there was agreement in regard to the plan that had resulted from the conversations. He then handed to Mr. MacDonald and Colonel Stimson copies of a document, strictly confidential, headed 'Points to be Confirmed, Appendix I.'<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Saito read this document paragraph by paragraph.

When Mr. Saito had read the following sentence:—'The sixteenth unit will be laid down in 1933; the seventeenth in 1934; the eighteenth in 1935', Senator Reed said it was expected that the conference would take place in 1935, but if, for any reason, to suit the convenience of any Government, for example, it had to be postponed, the position might be rather awkward, and he thought it might be better simply to say 'prior to 1935'.

Mr. Wakatsuki suggested 'prior to the conference'.

Colonel Stimson pointed out that, so long as the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth cruisers were laid down at the dates mentioned, the matter did not seem of great importance.

Senator Reed suggested to omit the words 'the conference in' before '1935'.

Mr. Wakatsuki thought it very desirable to hold the conference in 1935 and would make that proposal elsewhere, but he was prepared to delete the words 'the conference in'.

Colonel Stimson said that all wanted to have the conference in 1935.

Mr. MacDonald said he could rely on the British Government to do all that they humanly could to secure the conference in 1935.

It was agreed to omit the words 'the conference in' before '1935'.

Mr. Saito then continued to read the points to be confirmed down to the end of I (1) (a).

Mr. Wakatsuki interpolated at this point that he had written what he understood to be the understanding. Whether the form of reservation was to appear in the Treaty or where, he was not yet clear.

Senator Reed agreed. Somewhere, however, it would appear and be understood that America and Great Britain were free to state their point of view also.

Mr. Saito then continued to read I (1) (b).

Senator Reed said that that was quite correct.

(c) was also accepted as correct.

(d) *Submarines*. Mr. Craigie said that the actual figure had been 52,729 tons, not 52,700 tons.

<sup>1</sup> [Note in original text.] The Appendix is the version as slightly amended at this meeting.

Senator Reed said that round figures were usually spoken of.

Mr. Wakatsuki wished to have the point quite clear as he had to report to Tokyo what should be the figure.

Mr. MacDonald, after consulting his colleagues, suggested 52,700 tons.

This was agreed to.

Mr. Saito then continued to read the second page of the document. I (2)—a grammatical alteration was made in the substitution for the word 'it' of the word 'they' in the second line.

Mr. Saito read paragraph (3) as follows:—'The provisional agreement now to be made will form part of a treaty between the five Powers, including France and Italy.'

Mr. MacDonald said that this was what we hoped for and what we worked for.

Mr. Saito then read Section II.

Mr. MacDonald said that this was quite correct.

Senator Reed agreed.

Mr. Saito then read Section III.

Mr. Matsudaira recalled that in conversation it had been suggested that under the present arrangement construction would be practically brought to a standstill in Japan. This would be a great blow to the yards. Consequently, it was hoped that consideration would be given to finding some means for mitigating this difficulty, for example, by earlier replacement.

Senator Reed said that this was specially true in the matter of submarines where there would be a four year holiday.

Mr. Matsudaira said that it would apply also in some other categories.

Colonel Stimson said he understood the suggestion was that, in order to keep the dockyards in work, the Japanese should be allowed to scrap some of their submarines earlier and to replace without increasing the total tonnage.

Mr. Matsudaira said that was the principle the acceptance of which they asked.

Mr. MacDonald said he would be very glad to help Japan in this matter. It was possible that Great Britain might encounter the same difficulty themselves, but supposing either Japan or Great Britain were to decide to scrap a ship at twenty years, the authorised age of which was twenty-five years, it should be clear that they were not entitled to keep the twenty-year old ship after the other had been completed. The old ship would have to be scrapped before the new ship took its place.

Mr. Wakatsuki agreed that this was the proposal. There must be no increase in tonnage.

Mr. Saito then read Section IV relating to a naval holiday for capital ship construction.

Senator Reed agreed provided that a reduction is made down to 15.15.9.

Mr. MacDonald suggested that this should be inserted.

Mr. Wakatsuki had no objection to that. He had no objection to scrapping a ship of the *Kongo* class, but would prefer some other ship than the *Kongo* itself.

Senator Reed said the Japanese could pick any ship they liked from that class.

Mr. MacDonald said he was putting down a note in regard to the scrapping of the Washington capital ships down to the ratio of 15.15.9. (*Note by the Secretary General.* It will be noticed that this point does not appear in the Appendix. The point will have to be inserted at the proper place.)

Mr. Wakatsuki agreed.

Colonel Stimson said there was one more point he wished to raise. In the agreement between the United Kingdom and the United States Delegations there had been inserted an option between having eighteen 10,000 ton 8-inch gun cruisers with a certain proportion of smaller cruisers, and the alternative of fifteen 10,000 ton 8-inch gun cruisers with a larger proportion of smaller cruisers. This option had applied both to the United States and United Kingdom Governments. It was possible that neither Government would exercise the option, but it was of political importance to both countries to be able to keep the option.

Mr. MacDonald said he could state straightaway that the British Government would not exercise the option.

Colonel Stimson said that the United States Government did not expect to exercise it, but from the point of view of the political position of his country towards Great Britain he thought it of importance to retain it.

Mr. Wakatsuki said that in that case he would be glad if the other Delegations would give consideration to the Japanese claim for an over-all 70 per cent.

Colonel Stimson pointed out that this would give about 75 per cent to Japan in 8-inch gun cruisers.

Mr. Saito said that Mr. Wakatsuki asked only that consideration should be given to the proposal.

Colonel Stimson thought the change in the ratio which was very small would be more than offset by the Japanese increase in 8-inch cruisers, consequently, it would be better to leave matters alone. Referring once more to the option, he said that according to some views the United States Delegation had possibly put too much stress on 8-inch cruisers. Consequently, he would not like to say that they would not exercise the option in regard to the 8-inch gun cruiser.

Mr. Wakatsuki said that they might make some reservation to enable them to bring up the question of 8-inch gun cruisers again in 1937. He thought that the insertion of the proposal as regards an option would be quite in order, but as it had only just come up he would like time to think it over before giving a final answer.

Senator Reed read a note which he had made on his own memorandum on this point.

Mr. Saito then handed round a translation of a telegram received by the Japanese Delegation from the Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs on Tuesday, April 1st, 1930 (Appendix II).

Mr. Wakatsuki said that these were the instructions exactly as received



from his Government. He would have some points of detail to raise in connection with it, but he would like it to be read first.

Mr. Saito then read Appendix II.

Senator Reed suggested that the last paragraph might perhaps be enlarged so as to include destroyers. Conceivably it might be necessary to increase the destroyer figures in order to meet French requirements.

Mr. MacDonald said he would like to make the same observation. An increase in the submarine quota for some other Power might not have to be met by increasing British submarines, but by more destroyers. He thought some modification might be made accordingly.

Mr. Wakatsuki said he much appreciated the consideration that had been shown to his Delegation. He was anxious that all present should understand the spirit animating the instructions from his Government which he had just read. He was sorry it was impossible to continue the present discussion owing to the imminence of a Heads of Delegation meeting as he had some other points to raise.

Colonel Stimson asked if these comprised the whole of the instructions received?

Mr. Wakatsuki said it comprised the whole of the main instructions, but there remained some points of detail.

Colonel Stimson expressed his warm appreciation of the spirit in which the Japanese Government had accepted the joint proposal and asked Mr. Wakatsuki to express to Baron Shidehara, the Japanese Foreign Minister, his recognition of the very helpful and conciliatory attitude adopted by his Government.

Mr. MacDonald also placed on record his appreciation of the sympathetic understanding with which the Japanese Government had received the proposals made to them. He asked Mr. Wakatsuki to repeat his warm thanks to Baron Shidehara. Mr. MacDonald raised the question as to whether something could be said in regard to the Japanese communication at the forthcoming meeting of Heads of Delegations?

Colonel Stimson asked whether at the Plenary Meeting proposed for Friday Mr. Wakatsuki would be prepared to make a statement?<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Wakatsuki said he preferred to discuss the latter point on the morrow. He had no objection to mention being made of the spirit of the reply of the Japanese Government at the meeting of Heads of Delegations, but he would prefer that details were not given.

It was arranged to meet on the morrow at 11 a.m.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No plenary session of the Conference was held on this day. On the evening of April 2 the Japanese Delegation issued a statement in general terms to the press announcing the acceptance by the Japanese Government of the 'compromise plan'. This statement is printed in *Documents of the London Naval Conference, 1930*, p. 535.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to a meeting on April 3 further meetings of the Heads of the three Delegations took place on April 8, 9, 10, and 16 to discuss various points on which the Japanese Delegation asked for concessions. These discussions dealt mainly with technical questions and are therefore not printed in this Collection.

## APPENDIX I

### *Japanese Delegation to the London Naval Conference.*

*Strictly Confidential.*

#### *Points to be Confirmed*

I. It is understood that the purport of the compromise plan is as follows:

(1) The holdings in the auxiliary craft by the United States, Great Britain and Japan in 1936 will be:

(a) 8-inch gun cruisers:

United States: 18 units—180,000 tons.

Prior to 1935, more than 15 units—150,000 tons will not be completed. The 16th unit will be laid down in 1933, the 17th in 1934, the 18th in 1935.

Great Britain: 15 units—146,800 tons.

Japan: 12 units—108,400 tons.

In case the United States build more than 15 units—150,000 tons, Japan will be free to claim at the Conference of 1935 the right to build correspondingly. The formula of reservation in this sense to be agreed upon.

(b) 6-inch gun cruisers:

United States	143,500 tons.
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Great Britain	192,200 tons.
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Japan	100,450 tons.
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(c) Destroyers:

United States and Great Britain	150,000 tons each.
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Japan	105,500 tons.
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(d) Submarines:

United States, Great Britain and Japan	52,700 tons each.
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Totals: United States	526,200 tons.
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Great Britain	541,700 tons.
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Japan	367,050 tons.
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(2) The Treaty to be in force until the end of 1936. As to the arrangements thereafter, they will be considered at the Conference of the Signatory Powers to be held in 1935.

(3) The provisional agreement now to be made will form part of a Treaty between the Five Powers including France and Italy.

II. As to submarines, it is understood that in case the tonnage to be held by the United States and Great Britain becomes larger on account of their relation with France and Italy, the Japanese holdings will automatically be increased to maintain the parity.

III. It is understood that due consideration will be given to the maintenance of shipbuilding art and industry in war vessels in Japan.

IV. The Treaty will also comprise an agreement as to the institution of a naval holiday in regard to the capital ships.

## APPENDIX II

### *Japanese Delegation to the London Naval Conference.*

*Translation of a telegram received by the Japanese Delegation from the Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs, on Tuesday, April 1, 1930*

The Japanese Government place special emphasis on the promotion of international peace and goodwill and have for the purpose of furthering that object a firm resolve to co-operate with the other participating Powers to bring the Naval Conference of London to a successful conclusion. They have examined most carefully the compromise plan in such a spirit, and they fear that, since the adoption of the plan will result in a gradual decrease in the actual relative strength of the Japanese Navy in a few years to come, the Japanese people cannot but entertain a sense of uneasiness as to their national defence. In such eventuality, the essential object above referred to will by no means be attained, but, on the contrary, suspicions and misunderstandings in international relations will only be deepened. This is what the Japanese Government view with the most serious concern. It is, however, understood, that the plan under review is intended merely to take care of the situation up to 1936 and, as to the naval strengths to be possessed by the Powers concerned thereafter, they will be discussed and decided anew at the Conference of 1935. The Japanese Government, therefore, sincerely appreciating the spirit of accommodation and co-operation manifested by the American and British Delegations in the formulation of the present plan, have decided to agree to make the plan form the substance of the Treaty to be drafted.

2. Such being the fundamental thought that has prompted the Japanese Government to come to this decision, it is considered necessary, in giving their accord to the arrangement as to the 8-inch gun cruisers, to do so only on a precise understanding that it will not have a binding force and will be entirely without prejudice to the claim or stand of Japan in this respect at the Conference of 1935. It may certainly be self-evident but it is believed highly important to reiterate this point and make the situation unmistakably clear so as to assuage the possible disquietude of the people.

3. As to the question of submarines, it will be easily understood by the American and British Delegations that the proposal contained in the present plan will seriously operate against the maintenance of the shipbuilding art and industry of Japan. Since no new building of submarines is thereby authorised, the discharge of skilled mechanics and the closing of several of the private yards will consequently be necessitated. The result will be that the question of unemployment will become thereby even more accentuated. While the Japanese Government do not desire to add complications to the work of the Conference by proposing a material amendment in this connection to the plan under review, they wish to make a frank statement of the practical difficulties which Japan will surely encounter on this score and sincerely hope that the other Powers concerned will give a friendly consideration to the matter in order to work out some means to alleviate such

difficulties. In seeking the solution of this point, they are of course actuated by no other motive than to carry the matter to a successful issue.

Further, it is to be understood that, in case the tonnage to be held by the United States and Great Britain in submarines will become larger on account of their relations with France and Italy or for any other reason, the Japanese holdings will automatically be increased to maintain the parity.

## No. 176

### *Record of a conversation between Mr. MacDonald, Mr. Henderson, and Signor Grandi, April 3, 1930<sup>1</sup>*

After the Prime Minister had referred in general terms to the position of the negotiations between the French and ourselves,<sup>2</sup> Signor Grandi spoke with considerable indignation of the use to which the French were now trying to put these negotiations. Difficult as it was to believe that such a thing could be possible, the French were apparently maintaining that as a result of an interpretation of Article 16 which was being negotiated between the British and French alone, Italy was to be expected to make some further concession to France; in other words, this draft declaration which Signor Grandi had not yet seen and to which he really attached very little importance, was to be the *quid pro quo* for which Italy was to abandon the attitude which she had hitherto taken up in regard to the naval question.

The Prime Minister felt that Signor Grandi's estimate of the situation was not altogether accurate because the conversations with the French on this subject were still in a purely exploratory stage and it was naturally impossible to estimate how far a political understanding of this kind would ease the Italian situation until Italy had come into the negotiations.

Signor Rosso then stated that the Italian difficulty was this. If Italy were to be obliged to produce a programme, the Italian delegation would have to put down a figure for 1936 which would show equality with France and would necessarily involve a higher annual building programme than the French annual construction figure. He could not understand why more attention had not been paid to the offer conveyed in the Italian memorandum of last February. In this the Italian delegation had agreed by implication that France's present battleship excess tonnage of 100,000 tons could be retained for the period of the agreement; that Italy would not surpass France's tonnage in any of the various categories at any time during the period of the agreement, and finally that she was prepared to give six

<sup>1</sup> This conversation took place at St. James's Palace. Mr. P. Noel-Baker (Parliamentary Private Secretary to Mr. Henderson), Mr. Craigie, and Signor Rosso were also present.

<sup>2</sup> On March 31 the Italian Ambassador had suggested to Sir R. Vansittart that the Italian Delegation should share in the Anglo-French discussions on the question of security. Sir R. Vansittart explained that the discussions had been unofficial and informal and that before any agreement was reached the Italian Government would be consulted. Mr. MacDonald had seen Signor Grandi on April 1 and had expressed a hope that the Italian Government would take part in examining the question of a political declaration, if such a plan were found practicable.

months' notice (which might, Signor Rosso added, be prolonged possibly to a year) of her intention to lay down a new warship and to indicate the main characteristics of that ship. From the Italian point of view the essential thing was that some solution should be found which would not impair either directly or indirectly Italy's right to parity with France.

The Prime Minister expressed interest in this proposal and asked Signor Rosso to let him have it in the form of a memorandum or a private letter—whichever suited Signor Rosso best. He would like to study this plan carefully.

It was finally agreed that Signor Rosso and Mr. Craigie should endeavour to carry this discussion a step further after Signor Rosso had prepared the memorandum referred to above.

(Note by Mr. Craigie)

April 4, 1930

The conversation between Signor Rosso and myself foreshadowed in the last paragraph took place this morning. Signor Rosso communicated the attached memorandum (Appendix) summarising the present Italian position. We considered at some length various solutions by which a five-Power agreement might be reached without the Italian claim to parity being impaired either directly or indirectly. I said that in view of the fact that the French stand for a margin of 240,000 tons and the Italians were not prepared to agree to a margin of more than 150,000 tons, the best chance for a five-Power treaty lay perhaps in some such solution as the following: Italy would sign a five-Power treaty which would embody everything except the actual Italian programme for 1936: instead of the programme she would put in a declaration explaining her inability to produce figures at this stage, but declaring that during this period she would abide by the spirit of the treaty (i.e. avoidance of competition in naval construction). If such a treaty were to be concluded, it would then depend on Italy's common sense not to enter into a construction programme of such size as to oblige France to take advantage of the contingent clause to exceed her own maximum figure. Since Italy had declared over and over again that she had no intention actually of building up to parity or anything like parity with France before 1936, such a general undertaking should give Italy all she could reasonably expect. Such an arrangement would not be as satisfactory as a full five-Power treaty including Italy's figures, but it would be better than a situation involving unlimited competition between France and Italy.

Signor Rosso saw difficulties in the way of such an arrangement, but he did not appear to think that they would be insurmountable. He promised to think the matter over.

#### APPENDIX

1. Italy suggests and, subject to a similar undertaking from the other Powers, is ready to agree to postpone until 1937—or also *sine die*—the building of the capital ships which the five Powers are entitled by the Washington Treaty to lay down during the period 1931–1936.

(The acceptance of this suggestion would leave France with about 100,000 tons of Capital Ships more than Italy.)

2. Italy is prepared to undertake *not to exceed* the total tonnage of war vessels not covered by the Washington Treaty (viz. cruisers, destroyers and submarines) actually possessed *at any given time* by the strongest continental Power of Europe (One-Power continental standard).

3. Within the above total tonnage Italy is prepared to undertake *not to exceed* the total tonnage of submarines actually possessed *at any given time* by the aforesaid Power.

4. Provided the other Powers are willing to give a like undertaking, Italy is prepared to notify, six months at least before laying down the keel, the principal dimensions of the hull and the characteristics of the main armament of each ship to be built.

5. By leaving out of the limited categories, viz. by considering as 'special vessels' the armoured cruisers carrying guns above 6-inch (pre-Washington cruisers) France would have 66,963 tons of this class as against 33,644 of Italy. As some of these cruisers are being scrapped by Italy, the difference in favour of France could be made to approach 50,000 tons in this class of vessels; which added to the difference under paragraph 1, makes a total of about 150,000 tons in favour of France.

#### No. 177

*Sir R. Lindsay (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson*  
(Received April 4)

*No. 156 Telegraphic [A 2482/1/45]*

WASHINGTON, April 3, 1930

I saw the Acting Secretary of State today who told me that according to his report negotiations for a five-Power treaty involving clarification of Locarno treaties and Covenant were progressing somewhat more favourably. The French were in a rather better temper he thought. If His Majesty's Government could come to terms with them some formula could be reconstructed to bring Italians in. From these discussions United States delegation was comparatively aloof but his feeling was that one considerable obstacle was that all the elements necessary for success were not present, in other words that the Conference was too exclusively ex-allied in its character. The United States Government, he said, were committed to furthering a five-Power treaty; they would pursue this object with the utmost loyalty and leave no path to success unexplored. American delegation in London, perhaps because of the atmosphere surrounding them and because considerations of the position in America were not always so present to their minds, were more desirous of achieving a five-Power treaty than the administration here. He himself and President thought they would do all they could to further such an agreement would feel happier with a three-Power treaty. The expressed obligation of consultation would arouse considerable misgiving and opposition over here. It would be regarded as an obligation

which might have to be met in (the) circumstances the nature of which could not be foreseen. It might be argued that with principle of consultation so established in European questions the obligation should be extended to other less desirable fields, for instance, South America. The administration was not opposed to principle of consultation and would always be ready to have recourse to it in practice but his feeling was that as at present contemplated America would be rather too much in an ex-allied club for his taste and that if consultation were to take place he would sooner have it on a wider base than is now discussed. He would prefer that consultation should become an established habit in practice rather than a definite expressed obligation.

As to a three-Power Treaty he thought the chances of success were very favourable. What he would like would be some clause providing for subsequent adherence of French and Italian Governments when they were ready.

### No. 178

*Mr. A. Henderson to the Spanish Ambassador*

[A 2343/8/45]

Your Excellency,

FOREIGN OFFICE, *April 4, 1930*

I have the honour to refer to your note No. 65 of March 31<sup>1</sup>, in which you were so good as to emphasise the interest with which the Spanish Government are following the deliberations of the London Naval Conference, and to re-affirm the right of the Spanish Government to participate from the outset in any discussion that might take place on the Mediterranean question.

2. In reply, I beg leave to inform Your Excellency that the Mediterranean has not been under discussion at the Conference, and to repeat the assurances already conveyed to you by His Majesty's Government in their memorandum of January 17 last that no formal deliberations could take place, and no decisions be reached on a political problem of such importance, without full consultation with all the Mediterranean Powers concerned.

I have etc.

ARTHUR HENDERSON

<sup>1</sup> No. 172.

### No. 179

*Sir J. Tilley (Tokyo) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received April 5)*

*No. 108 Telegraphic [A 2487/1/45]*

TOKYO, *April 5, 1930*

Disarmament.<sup>1</sup>

Although Japan's acceptance of compromise is not viewed with satisfaction it has been received better than was expected. It is generally felt that

<sup>1</sup> On April 3 Sir J. Tilley had reported that the Chief of the Naval General Staff had submitted a memorial to the Emperor 'presumably setting forth his objections to the compromise. He refused to say anything to the press about its contents but gave them his views generally emphasizing the fact that the Naval Staff could not give its consent to the concession contained in that compromise'.

Government did the best they could in the circumstances and that maintaining of cordial relations with Great Britain and America will go a long way towards ensuring national security.

### No. 180

*Sir J. Tilley (Tokyo) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received April 5)*  
*No. 109 Telegraphic [A 2489/1/45]*

TOKYO, April 5, 1930

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

Government are not however free from anxiety as Naval Party and their partisans are still vehemently opposed to compromise and might cause serious trouble in the Diet which meets April 21.

Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs was manifestly anxious as to how political situation may develop if Anti-Compromise Party continued their campaign.

<sup>1</sup> No. 179.

### No. 181

*Notes of a meeting of representatives of the delegations of France and the United Kingdom, April 8, 1930<sup>1</sup>*

Present: *France*: M. Briand, M. de Fleuriau, M. Massigli, M. Dumesnil, M. Léger.

*United Kingdom*: Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Mr. A. Henderson, Mr. A. V. Alexander, Sir R. Vansittart, Mr. R. L. Craigie, Mr. H. W. Malkin, Mr. M. MacDonald.

The discussion at this meeting was mainly on the subject of the draft statement in regard to Article 16 of the Covenant which had been communicated to M. Briand at the end of the previous week before he left for Paris. (Appendix.)

Mr. MacDonald asked if M. Briand could tell them how he had fared in Paris.

M. Briand said as he had announced at the previous meeting he had consulted his colleagues in the French Cabinet and explained the situation to them arising out of the previous conversations. In regard to the draft statement as anticipated it had been received with a certain amount of disappointment. This was particularly the case in regard to the omission of that part of the declaration relating to Article 15 of the Covenant. The President of the Council who had attached considerable importance to this clause was particularly disappointed. M. Briand had explained that the addition of these words would create difficulties for the Prime Minister in the House of Commons and even in the Cabinet, so it had been generally

<sup>1</sup> This meeting was held in the Prime Minister's Room at the House of Commons.



agreed that it was not desirable to insist upon their inclusion. On the other hand, it had been felt desirable that the two Governments should agree on a declaration on the subject of Article 16. Some statement in regard to Article 16, no matter in what form, but based on the present paper would, it was felt, produce an excellent effect. It was also desirable that the two Governments should set out the friendly feeling by which they were animated by the issue of some such statement. From a practical point of view, the immediate aim was a statement of figures, but here they came up against the Italian position. The Italian demand for parity had produced a very important impression in France. It was impossible for the French Delegation to admit the Italian claim to parity which meant either that the Italian fleet must be doubled or the French fleet halved. He impressed upon the Prime Minister that it was essential that there should be a fixed margin between the fleets of France and Italy. He thought that the Prime Minister understood that French public opinion made it impossible to admit the principle of parity. Of course, the French Delegation was willing to discuss some compromise but if that compromise involved any admission on the part of the Delegation of the principle of parity, they would be received very badly in France. He had felt that this was a very grave point, so in order not to waste time he had asked his colleague, M. Dumesnil, to get in touch with Signor Grandi and see if any basis could be found for an agreement. M. Dumesnil had discussed the question with Signor Grandi for an hour and a half, but had failed to find any means of conciliation. Unfortunately, he had found Signor Grandi hermetically sealed and nothing could be done in that direction, since Signor Grandi appeared to be prevented by his instructions from making any advance.

Mr. MacDonald said that as promised he had produced the draft statement at meetings of the Cabinet on the previous day and a very close examination of it had been made. As M. Briand no doubt understood there was a certain hesitancy in this country to commit itself any further. Three points had arisen from this examination, one of which occurred twice and the other of which was required because the conversations had been conducted only between the two Delegations. The point that arose twice was the need for consulting Parliament. The clause relating to Article 16 (paragraph 5 of the Appendix) must provide that at the effective point in the discussion of the recommendation Parliament should have a chance of intervening. In any event, Parliament would have to be consulted because before any move could be made to carry out a recommendation the Government would have to obtain credits from Parliament. It was no use running away from that fact because whatever might be said now the necessity for this would be found when the time arose. Consequently, it was necessary to provide that when putting Article 16 into operation, Parliament should be consulted. The second point where the necessity for consulting Parliament arose was in Article 8 at the end of which, after the words 'with the least possible delay', the Cabinet desired to insert the words 'and receive the consent of Parliament'. That again would have to be done. A further point on which he

wished to warn M. Briand was that the draft statement did not cover the case of the Dominions. They would have to decide for themselves as in the case of the Locarno Treaty (Article 9). Finally, there was a drafting point which arose at the end of Article 4 where reference was made to 'rapid and effective joint action in accordance with a pre-arranged plan'. It would have to be clear that this did not refer to a military plan.

M. Massigli said that these words had been taken from a resolution of the League of Nations adopted in 1922 and known as Article XIV.

Mr. MacDonald said he thought the point was mainly a difference between the significance of words in the two languages. This gave a different impression in English from what it did in French. In English 'a prearranged plan', to ninety-nine per cent. of the readers, would be taken to refer to a military plan.

M. Massigli suggested that the difficulty could be surmounted by running paragraphs 3 and 4 together. As paragraph 3 began by a reference to Article XI of the Covenant, it would be clear that the words referred back to that Article.

After some discussion, it was agreed to amalgamate Articles III and IV into a single Article and to substitute for the words at the end 'a pre-arranged plan' the following, 'this Article'.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. MacDonald pointed out that Article V in its present form was not very comprehensible. He thought it ought to be divided into two or three sections.

Those, he said, were all the points that had been raised at the Cabinet meetings of the previous day.<sup>2</sup> The question arose as to whether the draft statement would now be sufficiently acceptable. He had been challenged on the subject in the House of Commons and he had promised to see the leaders of both the Opposition Parties the same evening, or tomorrow. Both had let him know that if there was any extended commitment, the House of Commons would reject it. That was a matter he would have to consider.

M. Briand said that there was nothing new in this declaration. It merely affirmed the present position.

Mr. MacDonald added that it also affirmed that we honestly intended to carry out our obligations under the Covenant.

The next point that arose was the position of Italy; would Italy come into

<sup>1</sup> [Note in original text.] The copy of the draft declaration in the Appendix shows the amendments as indicated to M. Briand by the Prime Minister.

<sup>2</sup> In the earlier discussions of the draft the French representatives had wished to insert at the end of paragraph 7 the following sentence: '(The Signatory Governments) hereby declare that, so far as they are concerned, a State resorting to hostilities in violation of the Pact of Paris shall, unless the Council decides otherwise, *ipso facto* be deemed to have committed an act of war against them within the meaning of the first paragraph of Article 16; they would in consequence immediately take against the aggressors the measures provided by the said paragraph.' His Majesty's Government were unwilling to accept this addition on the grounds (i) that it referred not to a violation of the Covenant but to a violation of the Pact of Paris and therefore involved a considerable extension of liabilities, (ii) that it laid these liabilities not upon all the Members of the League but only upon the Signatory Governments.

an agreement or not? The second point was as to whether agreement could be reached in regard to figures.

M. Briand said that the draft statement made no modification in the existing situation, but it would be a good thing to show mutual goodwill by carrying it into effect. It would be a good thing also if the Italian Delegation would sign the Treaty. They were, however, still faced with the Italian claim to parity with France. He thought Italy ought to be approached with a view to abating this claim. M. Dumesnil had told him that Signor Grandi had not refused to sign some statement of the kind under discussion. He had told M. Dumesnil that he was prepared to consult his Government on the subject, but the real point on which Signor Grandi ought to consult his Government was parity.

Mr. Henderson said that if M. Briand was going to stay at this Conference until Signor Grandi abandoned parity, the world would have changed a good deal before he got away. It would be extremely difficult to persuade Signor Grandi to put anything into the document that would forfeit the right which Italy thought she had obtained at Washington in 1922. He thought M. Briand ought to be quite clear in his mind that the draft statement which was under discussion had been negotiated as a Three-Power document and not a Two-Power document. He himself had had charge of these negotiations at a certain stage and he had made it perfectly clear that the draft statement had first to be considered by his own Government and must afterwards be passed to Signor Grandi and his acceptance obtained. That was a condition of the acceptance of the agreement.

M. Briand quite agreed, but, if he might make a digression, he wished to make clear that at Washington parity had never been accorded to Italy on total tonnage.<sup>1</sup> Never. Never. Signor Grandi himself had not been at Washington, nor was his Government in existence at the time. In those days there was a representative Government in Italy, as in France, and Signor Grandi had had nothing to do with the conversations that had taken place with that Government. The word 'parity' was never mentioned in the Washington figures. Parity had never been accepted, except for capital ships and France had never accepted parity for the whole of their fleet. He recalled that, when he had sent a telegram to Mr. Hughes accepting the figures in the Washington Conference, he had also stated that, in regard to other categories France retained entire liberty. When the French Delegation had come to the present Conference, it had been prepared to negotiate on the basis of leaving parity on one side. Italy, of course, could have reserved her claim and the French Delegation would have listened and left the question

<sup>1</sup> In a conversation of March 13 with Mr. MacDonald M. Briand said the alleged French acceptance of parity at Washington had been based only upon a telegram from himself to M. Sarraut. This telegram had not been communicated to the Italians, and, if it were read in its proper context, the reference to parity would be found to be based on the assumption (which was not the case) that Italy could prove that her needs were equal to those of France. In any case the reference was contingent upon the French level of strength being taken as the standard of parity. M. Briand admitted that there might have been some oral reference to parity in the conversations with Italy before the London Conference.

at that. He felt that the Treaty was only for six years and, by leaving parity on one side, it might have been possible to advance to a solution. If the disparity between the French and Italian Fleets had been something new, he could have understood Signor Grandi's attitude, but, in fact, the difference between their fleets had existed since the year 1900. The Italian claim for parity, therefore, was comparable with the position if Japan were to claim parity with Great Britain who, of course, in such a case would have to give the same answer as France gave now.

Mr. MacDonald said he had seen Signor Grandi again and again and he would not give up parity. He would not discuss programmes because he said that, if he were to admit a disparity between the fleets of 100,000 tons (which was probably less than he envisaged, in fact), he would be departing from the principle of parity, which would be contrary to his instructions. Speaking with all reserve, he thought that Signor Grandi might be willing to put in some kind of document stating that he claimed parity, but might not build to it in view of the fact that the agreement was only to last for five or six years. He might also be willing to say that his building depended upon the building of other Powers. He thought he had got Signor Grandi up to that point, but he doubted if he could get him any further. He did not believe that he could get the Italian Delegation to discuss programmes.

M. Briand said that from the point of view of her needs the French figures were based on the necessities of their security in the Mediterranean. The margin between France and Italy as he had said had never varied since 1900. The new Treaty was only for a short term. Why should they not register the position as it stood and maintain the present figures? If the Italian Delegation wanted to maintain their number there would be no difficulty, but France could not admit the Italian right to parity or that the present margins should be diminished. It was only necessary to look at a map to see how different were the needs of France from those of Italy. Why, he asked, did Italy raise this question at the Conference? The question of the Mediterranean was one that depended upon other Powers that were not represented here where a world question was being dealt with.

Mr. Henderson said he had had a long conversation with Signor Grandi who had laid down that he could not depart from his claim to parity. At the same time, Signor Grandi seemed to think if a Five-Power Agreement were reached, Italy would not build to parity. That seemed to him a very important point. If no Five-Power Agreement resulted, Italy would build in order to achieve parity so that at the Conference of 1935 they would have substantiated their claim to parity. That opened up a very serious situation. The competition in armaments that would result would have a very serious effect on all the States in Europe and would be disastrous to the work of the Preparatory Commission at Geneva. The British and French Delegations had never been so near agreement so they ought to try and reach agreement in order to avert the very serious consequences that would arise in Europe.

M. Briand said he was of the same opinion. He himself was disposed to consider some form of compromise but he did not think that Signor Grandi

was similarly disposed. He had the strictest instructions against making any compromise.

Mr. MacDonald said the position was very difficult. If Signor Grandi had been in a position to negotiate they might have exchanged views, but he was not in such a position and that was the situation that had to be faced.

M. Briand said it was pitiable that the Conference should be confronted with such an obstacle which might have been overcome with goodwill all round.

Mr. MacDonald asked whether any further negotiations had taken place between the British and French Delegations in regard to tonnage figures?

Mr. Craigie said that they had been abandoned during this stage of the political negotiations.

Mr. MacDonald asked how the French Delegation visualised an agreement. Various elements would have to be fitted in. The United States, Japan and the United Kingdom were prepared to fill in every figure, both for category and global tonnage. Only one point was now outstanding between them. Was the French Delegation now in a position or not to fill in tables which would be in equilibrium with the tables of the other three? If they could do that the Italian situation would be a serious one since by a clause comparable to Article XXI of the Washington Treaty all the Delegations that had completed their figures would be covered in such a way that if the building of some other Power upset their programmes they could inform the other parties to the Agreement and certain things would happen. A good deal depended therefore upon whether French figures could be produced which could be brought into equilibrium with the tables for the United Kingdom, the United States and Japan.

M. Briand asked M. Dumesnil if he were in a position to fill in figures?

M. Dumesnil said, of course, he could fill in figures, but it remained to be seen if they would harmonise with the figures of the other countries. He was quite prepared to discuss the matter in a spirit of conciliation but it remained to be seen whether agreement could be reached.

M. Briand said that at the last meeting the question of a Four-Power Agreement had been raised. At the first moment he had had the impression that it would be a bad thing to do to put Italy into isolation. That would be to put Italy in a bad humour and it would be a misfortune to cut the bridges between France and Italy. He wanted to be able to continue the conversations with Italy, but if a Four-Power Agreement were entered into it might render such conversations impossible.

Mr. Henderson suggested that if the Minister of Marine and the First Lord of the Admiralty could come to terms in regard to figures, he should take up with the Italian Delegation the draft statement which had been discussed and which he thought was more or less agreed. It was no good his doing this, however, unless they were agreed in regard to figures.

M. Briand said that such agreement was not impossible and ought to be attempted, but if Italy remained outside their abstention must exercise an effect upon French figures. The Italian figures must be the basis of the

French figures. If Italy saw that all the Powers were agreed on figures it might produce some impression, but he doubted it. He saw no objection to the two Ministers of Marine having a discussion on the subject.

Mr. MacDonald concurred that a Four-Power Agreement was unthinkable. Also judging by his conversations with Signor Grandi he thought it would be very difficult to get him to produce any figures. What he had been turning over in his mind was as to whether, supposing the other four Powers could arrive at agreement on figures, Signor Grandi could be induced to make a declaration to the effect that he had declared his determination to work in the spirit of the agreement and would pledge Italy to observe it and to co-operate in making it workable. Then France and the United Kingdom would have in their agreement a provision corresponding to Article XXI of the Washington Treaty and would declare that the Conference had ended well so far as agreement between the two Powers was concerned, but that it was desirable to obtain agreement with Italy by further discussions. In this way there would be a Five-Power Agreement, but a failure of one Power would have placed the two countries in an uncertain position, and consequently, a declaration would be made that the three Powers would continue their conversations. Then if Italy began to build to parity it would be a British interest to put the difficulty that arose both to Italy and to the United States of America as all the figures would then be upset.

M. Briand said he would like to reflect upon the proposal which he felt deserved careful consideration. He was certain that Signor Grandi would produce no figures. The French Delegation, of course, knew what the Italian figures were. Just as the British figures were based on those of America and Japan, so the French figures were founded upon those of Italy, though those figures were based on a French signature and not on Signor Grandi's. The Prime Minister's proposal was worth thinking over since it took account of the future. He would like to reflect upon it until the following day. In principle he found it interesting.

Mr. MacDonald said this was a result of many attempts in the same direction. So much depended on figures that he hoped that before the next meeting on the morrow the two Ministers of Marine would discuss the question of figures in the most friendly way for the period of bargaining was now past. The real question was as to whether it was possible to get equilibrium between the French figures and those of the other Powers. Then on the morrow they could consider their position in relation to the European equilibrium and see what kind of agreement was feasible.

M. Briand suggested that the press should be told that the two Delegations had discussed the affairs of the Conference as a whole and that from a political point of view they were in agreement in regard to Article 16.

Mr. MacDonald thought it would be better to omit the latter point, but suggested they should say that both Delegations were working hard to discover a means for a Five-Power Agreement.

M. Briand said that was what he meant when he talked of studying the work of the Conference as a whole.

Mr. MacDonald said that he wanted to make clear, though not in the communiqué, that he was seeing Signor Grandi on the morrow.

It was agreed to meet on Wednesday, April 9th, at St. James's Palace, at 5 p.m.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The report concluded with the text of a press communiqué which was issued after the meeting.

## APPENDIX

### *Draft Declaration*

(Incorporating amendments desired by the United Kingdom Delegation as intimated to M. Briand by the Prime Minister at the Meeting between the two Delegations on 8th April, 1930).

*Note.* New words are underlined.

The Undersigned, fully authorised to that effect, hereby declare as follows:

1. Recognising as we do that a close connection exists between international security and the reduction and limitation of armaments, we desire on the occasion of the signature of the treaty for the limitation of naval armament, to place on record the understanding of our respective Governments of the position as regards security as it now exists for Members of the League of Nations.

2. Those Members of the League who are parties to the Treaty for the Renunciation of War signed at Paris on August 27th, 1928, have already agreed that the settlement or solution of all disputes or conflicts of whatever nature or of whatever origin they may be which may arise among them, shall never be sought except by pacific means. Among the methods which exist for giving effect to this obligation, in addition to the Covenant itself, are the Optional Clause, the General Act, and the conclusion of bilateral arbitration treaties, and it is the intention of our Governments to make the fullest use of such methods for the settlement of any disputes which may arise between them.

3. In the event of a threat of war Article 11 provides that the League is to take any action that may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of nations, and that any Member of the League may forthwith cause a meeting of the Council to be summoned. The importance of the role of the Council under this article in preventing an outbreak of war has been increasingly recognised in recent years, and our Governments view with the greatest interest and sympathy the efforts which are being made to place further powers at the disposal of the Council when carrying out its functions under this article. They are resolved to encourage these efforts in order that the competent organs of the League may as soon as possible draw up proposals having for

*Note* Formerly para. 4; now amalgamated with para. 3.

their purpose the prevention of war by rapid and effective joint action in accordance with this Article.

To be re-drafted so as to provide that Parliament shall be consulted before a recommendation is agreed to by the British representative at the Council of the League of Nations.

4. We recognise that each state Member of the League is bound to co-operate loyally and effectively in support of the Covenant and in resistance to any act of aggression to an extent which is compatible with its military situation and takes its geographical position into account. Since, before making recommendations under paragraph 2 of Article 16 as to the effective military, naval or air force which (in accordance with the terms of the Covenant itself) 'the Members of the League shall severally contribute to the armed forces to be used to protect the covenants of the League', the Council will necessarily have taken into account the military situation and the geographical position of the states concerned, our Governments declare their intention of complying promptly with the recommendations which the Council may make under this paragraph, and of fulfilling loyally and effectively their obligations under paragraph 1 of the said article.

Formerly para. 6.

5. At the present time the obligations resulting from Article 16 for the Members of the League enter into force in case of violation of the engagements resulting from Articles 12, 13 and 15 of the Covenant. As they now stand these articles do not exclude the possibility of recourse to force in circumstances where the Pact of Paris forbids it.

Formerly para. 7.

6. Amendments are now under consideration for the purpose of rectifying this situation.

Formerly para. 8.

7. Our Governments undertake to do everything in their power, in co-operation with other Members of the League, to ensure that these amendments shall be incorporated in the Covenant with the least possible delay, and receive the consent of Parliament.

Formerly para. 9.

8. Our Governments are convinced that this declaration will dissipate all uncertainty regarding their common intention fully to carry out, should need arise, the duty which the Covenant of the League of Nations lays upon them; and that by so doing it will effectively help to prevent any situation arising in which, as the result of the failure of preventive action, the question for the community of nations would be no longer the maintenance but the re-establishment of peace.

*Note.* A new paragraph is to be introduced indicating that the Dominions and India are not parties to this declaration, unless they signify their acceptance. (Compare Locarno Treaty, Article 9.)



*Notes of a meeting of representatives of the delegations of France  
and the United Kingdom, April 9, 1930<sup>1</sup>*

Present: *France*: M. Briand, M. de Fleuriau, M. Dumesnil, M. Massigli, M. Léger.

*United Kingdom*: Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Mr. A. Henderson, Mr. A. V. Alexander, Sir R. Vansittart, Mr. P. Noel-Baker, Mr. R. L. Craigie, Mr. H. W. Malkin, Mr. M. MacDonald.

Mr. MacDonald said that Mr. Alexander had told him that the meeting that morning on figures had been somewhat unproductive.

M. Briand thought it was an exaggeration to say that the conversations had been sterile. He would like to hear M. Dumesnil's views on this.

M. Dumesnil said that the First Lord had asked him what was the limit of disparity between the French and Italian fleets required by the French Delegation. He had replied that France could not go below a disparity of 240,000 tons. Working on the basis of 400,000 tons for Italy this brought the French figure to 640,000 tons. It would be difficult to reduce that figure or to discuss any reduction of it until the Italians had accepted the figure of disparity. If the Italians insisted on maintaining the principle of parity it was difficult to make any progress. In these conditions of uncertainty it was difficult to carry the matter further into a consideration of the different types of ships. He had told Mr. Alexander that if Italy would agree to this figure of disparity, France was prepared to limit the number of big cruisers to nine, but there would be some replacement in the category of capital ships. That was the result of his meeting with the First Lord which he thought Mr. Craigie who had been present would confirm. The First Lord had indicated that the Italians would probably consider the figure of 240,000 too great and had asked if France could reduce below that figure. He had replied that the figure was indispensable having regard to French requirements in the Mediterranean, the needs of stations such as the North Sea, the colonies and the communications with them. The First Lord said he would obtain a definite opinion from the Italian Delegation and then the conversations might be resumed. At M. Briand's suggestion he added that what he had said confirmed the indications of the French Government.

M. Briand said that after the meeting on the previous evening, following on the suggestion made by the Prime Minister, in case Italy's goodwill was forthcoming, he had got into telephonic communication with the President of the Council in order to ascertain his views. About the same time he had received a telephone message from Signor Grandi making a rendezvous for this morning. When the morning came, however, a further message had been received to the effect that Signor Grandi was ill, so the conversation could not take place. He hoped, however, to meet Signor Grandi tomorrow. He would now give the point of view of the French Delegation which he

<sup>1</sup> This meeting was held in the Prime Minister's room at the House of Commons.

proposed to lay frankly before Signor Grandi when he met him. He recalled that before leaving London M. Tardieu had told the Prime Minister what was the indispensable margin between the French and Italian fleets. It was the same figure as M. Dumesnil had just explained, viz. 240,000 tons. This figure was not produced in an arbitrary manner. The whole subject had been carefully studied and the figure corresponded to an examination of the situation. This was not a new matter at all. The disparity had existed since 1900 between France and Italy. Indeed, before the war it had been rather more marked than now. Today the disparity was approximately at the figure of 240,000 tons. He saw no reason why Italy should take the view that she must emerge from this Conference with the right either to double her fleet in order to arrive at parity with the French or for the French fleet to be halved in order to reduce its strength to that of Italy. There could be no comparison between the needs of the French and the Italian fleets. Italy had only one sea to consider in which she could concentrate her ships. France had the Mediterranean, the Atlantic and Colonial possessions. It was impossible to reduce to parity. The question had come up as a matter of prestige at the outset of the Conference and Italy still maintained that pretension. Suppose France were to envisage equality with Italy. They had to consider their African colonies. One day it might be necessary for them to transfer troops from those colonies, which constituted three Departments, and for this purpose not less than six ships of 10,000 tons were indispensable. Then the Atlantic had to be considered and French public opinion demanded that France should have a fleet to deal with the German fleet. In those circumstances it was impossible to induce public opinion to accept parity with Italy. All this had been explained to the Italian Delegation. Admiral Descottes-Genon had made a statement to them to justify this difference. If Italy desired a settlement two things were indispensable. First, to sign the declaration of interpretation of Article 16 of the Covenant and second, to undertake to do nothing to upset the equilibrium to be established by the four Powers. If those conditions could not be secured it was difficult to get agreement. If another four days were spent in discussing figures and nothing happened, Paris would be very dissatisfied, but if Signor Grandi could accept these conditions, M. Briand was ready to go forward.

M. de Fleuriau interposed at this point to emphasise that M. Briand had consulted the President of the Council before making these remarks.

Mr. MacDonald said he also was to have seen Signor Grandi today but found that he was ill. Instead, he and the Foreign Secretary had seen the Italian Ambassador and Signor Rosso. They had been told that Italy could not agree to a margin of 240,000 tons inferiority. He did not think there was any chance of moving them out of that position. He had told the Italian Delegation of the conversation with the French Delegation at the last meeting. It was difficult, however, to obtain anything from them because Signor Grandi had the political side of the question in hand. From the press he gathered that Signor Grandi's idea was that the interpretation of the Covenant ought to be dealt with at Geneva and could not be taken up

here. That, however, required confirmation. The third question he had discussed related to the proposed formula for Italian co-operation. He had wanted to ascertain if Italy could put in some statement enabling her to participate in the agreement. The Italian representatives had asked to go back and consider this and had promised to let the Prime Minister have some formula this afternoon. He had asked for it before 5 p.m. and had told them that it would be very convenient if he could receive the formula before he met the French Delegation again, but up to the present he had received no indication.

Mr. Henderson remarked that the whole position appeared to turn upon the attitude of the Italian Delegation.

Mr. MacDonald remarked that the question of figures was not yet disposed of between the two Delegations. Supposing Italy did not exist, could the British and French Delegations come to agreement in regard to figures which both would regard as figures of equilibrium in the same way as agreement had been reached between the United Kingdom, the United States and Japan?

M. Briand said it was difficult to reply to this. He compared the position of the French Delegation to what that of the British Delegation would have been if Japan had adopted the same attitude as Italy. In such an event could the United Kingdom have settled with America? They could not have done so by imagining that Japan did not exist. The French attitude was dominated by the position of the Italian fleet. That was the dominating consideration in the public mind. He thought it very difficult and undesirable to envisage an agreement between the four Powers without Italy. It would be a bad thing to have outside of these conversations a country which was in a state of bad humour. To do so would only be to aggravate the international position and would make it especially difficult for France. Italy was now only asked in a Five-Power Agreement to play a part of effacing herself and blessing the others. The Conference had begun by discussing programmes; Italy refused to give one. Then they had discussed methods; Italy had made a general reservation. If Italy could not give a programme he could not give his. The 150,000 tons disparity proposed did not approach the needs of the situation. It was an impossible position in which to put an International Conference when one party took that line. He reiterated the fact that Italy had six large cruisers though she had no colonies. By a great compression France had decided to envisage only nine large cruisers, that was to say only three more than Italy. This decision had been taken in spite of the difficulties of their situation and wide responsibilities. There was a risk of the French Delegation getting into a position which would be indefensible before French public opinion. He thought it was indispensable that he should meet Signor Grandi and explain the position frankly and get his reply. Just as Japan was an essential element for Great Britain so Italy was an essential element for France. In one important particular the Italian Delegation was in a peculiarly privileged position as compared with the other Delegations. The French Delegation had to consider the Chamber. Mr. MacDonald had to consider his Parliament as he had mentioned when the question of a Political

Pact was under consideration. When the question of a Consultative Pact had been discussed with Colonel Stimson he had said he could never get it through the Senate. Italy had no such preoccupations. There was no Chamber and no Senate. Their hands were perfectly free and yet they were more rigid than any other Delegation. Moreover the Italian Government was not helping at the present time. Five ships were shortly to be launched and an announcement had been issued in the press that they were to be christened by a Royal Princess amid manifestations and rejoicings. When French public opinion read that it made matters very difficult. When did Mr. MacDonald expect to know whether Italy would accept the formula?

Mr. Henderson said the Italian Delegation had not been sure about being able to let the Prime Minister have it that afternoon. In view of Signor Grandi's illness it was hardly fair to expect it. That would delay matters until the morrow.

Mr. MacDonald was afraid of getting once more into a position where no further progress could be made in the matter of figures. The French Delegation had defined their position and his Delegation had defined theirs. It might be that quite honestly agreement was impossible. He had put the question several times as to whether this was the position or not. After the conversation between the Ministers of Marine he was inclined to think it might be so, formula or no formula. That was the impression he had derived after his conversation with Mr. Alexander. As he understood it the Ministers of Marine had come to the conclusion that any further conversations should be between the Heads of Delegations.

M. Briand said that if Italy would make a declaration to the effect that in case the others reached agreement for a six years Convention she would do nothing to upset it, that would enable France to participate. But if Italy did not say that, they were back in the same position as yesterday and the problem appeared insoluble. They had the proposed text in regard to Article 16 of the Covenant, which the President of the Council had found very interesting, but it did not really change the situation. If this proposed declaration was set aside by Italy the situation would remain as it was.

Mr. MacDonald agreed with M. Briand. It was a great embarrassment that Signor Grandi should be ill at this moment. He asked M. Briand to say, quite privately, whether, in his view, it would be better for the British, French and Italian Delegations to meet together or whether it would be better for him and M. Briand to see them separately.

M. Briand said that nothing would please him more than a tripartite conversation. He thought, however, it would be best that he and the Prime Minister should sound the position and make an effort to move Signor Grandi a little. If they found his resistance was not absolute, then a meeting of the three Delegations might be useful. But he had no strong views on the matter.

Mr. Henderson thought the best plan would be a *tête-à-tête* between the Prime Minister, as Chairman of the Conference, and Signor Grandi, just as he, as Chairman of the Political Commission, had had many such conversations at The Hague.

M. Briand said that he himself would like to see Signor Grandi on the morrow.

Mr. MacDonald said he also would see Signor Grandi. In any event he thought the two Delegations ought to discover whether they could reach agreed figures if Italy gave a satisfactory formula. It would be an awkward position if Italy gave a formula and agreement could not be reached on figures. If agreement could not be reached it would be necessary to arrange to continue the conversations afterwards. The three Delegations would publicly express their good will and sign parts of the Agreement, and then continue their conversations afterwards. But if Italy gave a formula and nothing more happened, that would be a very serious situation.

M. Briand felt no doubt that if Italy could accept the proposed formula an Agreement could be reached. He would not envisage any other possibility. If such a decision could be reached it would revolutionise the whole Conference.

Mr. Henderson suggested that it was all-important to get the formula drafted and have it studied by the French Delegation and the Chairman of the Conference before the interview with Signor Grandi.

M. Briand said the first thing was to get Signor Grandi's formula. If that could be obtained it could be studied together.

Mr. Craigie, who had been out of the room at the telephone, returned at this point to say that he had spoken to Signor Rosso, who had promised to let him know very shortly whether the formula would arrive that evening or in the morning.

Mr. MacDonald said that as soon as he knew he would let M. Briand know, and make appointments with a view to discussing the formula before they saw Signor Grandi.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The report concluded with the text of a press communiqué issued after the meeting.

## No. 183

*Notes of a meeting of representatives of the delegations of France and the United Kingdom,<sup>1</sup> April 10, 1930, 11.30 a.m.*

Present: *France*: M. Briand, M. de Fleuriau, M. Dumesnil, M. Massigli, M. Léger.

*United Kingdom*: Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Mr. A. Henderson, Mr. A. V. Alexander, Sir R. Vansittart, Mr. R. L. Craigie, Mr. H. W. Malkin, Mr. P. Noel-Baker, Mr. M. MacDonald.

Mr. MacDonald referred to a letter he had received from Signor Grandi on the previous evening, a copy of which he had sent confidentially and unofficially to the French Delegation, in order that they might see it before this meeting. (Appendix.) He had been asked by Signor Grandi's messenger if he had anything to say on the subject. He had replied that he had not yet had time to study it and that it would be better to leave the document on that basis. The question that arose was as to whether, in view of this letter,

<sup>1</sup> This meeting was held at St. James's Palace.

it was any use carrying out the plan made yesterday that he and M. Briand should see Signor Grandi.

M. Briand said that the letter did not indicate progress. It indicated no change. It was a confirmation with aggravated details of the previous Italian attitude. It re-asserted the principle of parity not only in global tonnage, but in all categories. As a demonstration it might be startling, but it did not improve and only worsened the situation. He was hoping to see Signor Grandi, who was still indisposed, at his hotel that afternoon and would try to get him to realise this. He would report if he found any tendency on Signor Grandi's part to depart from his position. At present, however, he felt somewhat discouraged. This was a maintenance of the principle of parity and its application in detail to other categories, in particular submarines. If the first of the three undertakings were taken in conjunction with the first few words 'within the above tonnage' of the second undertaking, it would seem that Italy, by not building up to parity in submarines could exceed it in cruisers. The document gave a very poor point from which to start conversations.

Mr. MacDonald did not think the document was intended to enable Italy to build more cruisers than France. It was probably a drafting mistake.

M. Dumesnil said that at least it was a possibility. The Italian Delegation said they would not build beyond parity in total tonnage, and in addition that in one particular category only, viz. submarines, they also said they would not build beyond parity with France. But they did not make the same declaration as regards other categories and there remained the possibility that in these other unmentioned categories they could build above parity.

Mr. Henderson thought it would be wrong to assume this.

M. Briand said that in any case the document was a specific re-affirmation of the principle of parity. He had never seen such a document before in an International Conference. It was usual to put the matter in the form of figures. He added that the letter did not contain a word about association in the political declaration.

Mr. MacDonald thought the best plan would be to have an interview with Signor Grandi. If he showed no sign of yielding, the situation would have to be re-considered. He himself had been thinking a good deal about the position that would then arise. He thought it would be advisable in that event to make clear that the conversations in this Conference were to be continued. It was not likely that agreement could be reached within the next two or three weeks even by continuing the conversations here. It would, however, be a great pity and mistake to close down the conversations without any further negotiations. Both the American and Japanese Delegations were anxious to get away. If they went, why could not the other three Powers, the European Powers, agree to continue their conversations elsewhere, not sitting in London, but taking advantage of any opportunities of meeting either at Geneva or at Paris, and gradually pushing ahead? In fact, he proposed to continue the negotiations with more flexible machinery.

M. Briand added 'also by diplomatic channels'.

Mr. MacDonald agreed. Every opportunity should be taken to continue the discussions.

M. Dumesnil saw no objection.

M. Briand said that it would be very unfortunate at the end of the Conference to give the impression that it had concluded with an impossibility of ameliorating the situation, but if some means could be found of keeping the conversations going he would welcome it with great satisfaction and accept the proposal with pleasure. Speaking strictly privately and confidentially he pointed out that there was not the slightest doubt that if the efforts begun three years ago to negotiate a political agreement which were to have resulted in a Treaty of Arbitration and Conciliation with Italy had been successfully concluded the whole situation would have been quite different. Those negotiations had, in fact, almost arrived at completion, but the conversations had eventually been broken off. He had also retained the hope that they might be continued and that agreement might be reached.

Mr. MacDonald asked what was the nature of the negotiations?

M. Briand said they referred to a number of differences, some small and some great, between the two countries. For example, the status of Italians in Tunis and colonial questions relating to Tripoli. Some of these questions had been definitely settled; for example, one relating to Morocco in which Great Britain also had been concerned. If only those questions could be cleared up they would result in an Agreement of Arbitration and Conciliation.

Mr. MacDonald said it was essential that the conversations between the three European Powers should not be broken off.

M. Briand was quite of his opinion. Anything that could be done should be done to keep the conversations in being.

Mr. MacDonald a little regretted that further progress had not been possible. He would, however, make one more effort this afternoon with Signor Grandi.

M. Briand said he hoped to see Signor Grandi between 3.30 and 4 p.m.

Mr. MacDonald said he would see the Italian Ambassador.

It was arranged that the next meeting should take place at 10, Downing Street, at 6.30 p.m.

The following press communiqué was issued:

'The French and United Kingdom Delegations met at St. James's Palace this morning at 11.30. The meeting adjourned soon after 12 in order to allow conversations with the Italian Delegation to be carried on during the afternoon and will be resumed at 6.30 p.m. at 10, Downing Street.'

#### APPENDIX

##### *Delegazione Italiana alla Conferenza Navale di Londra*

Dear Mr. MacDonald,

LONDON, 9th of April, 1930

Complying with your request, I beg to communicate to you the terms of the undertakings which the Italian Delegation would be willing to give in

order to facilitate the conclusion of an agreement between the five Powers here represented:

Italy, while asserting her right to a navy equal in tonnage to that of the strongest European continental Power, declares its agreement with the intentions of the other signatory Powers and therefore its willingness to co-operate with them in furthering the cause of disarmament, by giving the following undertakings for the duration of the agreement:

- (1) Italy will not exceed the total tonnage of war vessels not covered by the Washington Treaty actually possessed at any given time by the strongest European continental Power;
- (2) Within the above tonnage Italy will not exceed the total tonnage of submarines actually possessed at any given time by the aforesaid Power;
- (3) Subject to the condition of reciprocity, Italy will notify to the other signatory Powers, six months at least before laying down the keel, the principal dimensions of the hull and the characteristics of the main armament of each ship to be built during the life of the present Convention.

I am, etc.,

GRANDI

#### No. 184

*Notes of a meeting of representatives of the delegations of France, the United Kingdom, and Italy, April 10, 1930, 6.30 p.m.<sup>1</sup>*

Present: *France*: M. Briand, M. de Fleuriau, M. Dumesnil, M. Léger.

*United Kingdom*: Mr. J. Ramsay MacDonald, Mr. A. Henderson, Mr. A. V. Alexander, Sir R. Vansittart, Mr. Craigie, Mr. H. W. Malkin, Mr. P. Noel-Baker, Mr. M. MacDonald.

*Italy*: Signor A. Chiaramonte-Bordonaro, Signor A. Rosso, Signor Pellegrino Chigi.

Mr. MacDonald said that the fact of a Three-Power Agreement having been reached was in all the newspapers and he had been pressed to make a statement in Parliament. Colonel Stimson had telephoned that the facts had also leaked out in regard to the situation between the British, French and Italian Delegations. He had summoned this meeting in order that the three delegations could see whether there were still any possibility of agreement on figures with a view to a Five-Power Treaty or whether there was only time now to smooth things out with a view to a future approach to figures. He was willing to adopt either course.

M. Briand said he had seen Signor Grandi, in spite of the fact that he was laid up, and they had agreed that it was impossible to bring their views together sufficiently for a Five-Power Agreement. He had then put to Signor Grandi the Prime Minister's suggestion that all the measure of

<sup>1</sup> This meeting took place at St. James's Palace. The hour is wrongly reported in the heading of the Notes as 11.30 a.m.



agreement reached should be thrown together with a view to a Five-Power Treaty, and for the rest to leave matters open between the three Powers to reach agreement later. Signor Grandi had shown himself a partisan of that course. Colonel Stimson had seen him at 1 o'clock and had made the same proposal. He himself would be glad to continue conversations with a view to an eventual agreement, and had told Colonel Stimson so. So to go on in this way was the best course.

Signor Bordonaro said he had nothing to add to the point of view already expressed to M. Briand by Signor Grandi. In principle the Italian Delegation would accept the Prime Minister's point of view.

Mr. MacDonald said he had mentioned the proposal to Colonel Stimson on the previous evening when dining with him. Colonel Stimson said he was quite in agreement, and when he arrived that morning had produced a paper. He thought that the Conference had done a great deal of good. It had faced successfully questions which up to that time had not been faced. The Conference was certainly not a failure and much good had been brought out of it. He would like, however, to go ahead amongst the three countries which were represented and to reach agreement. He asked whether the following idea would conform to the views of his colleagues. Agreement had now been reached between the three Powers, America, Japan and the United Kingdom, but agreement had not been reached between the European Powers. It could be stated that the European Agreement had to concern itself with more complex conditions and required longer to straighten out. He hoped that the Three-Power Agreement would be ratified, with the consent of France and Italy. Then the Delegations of the distant Powers could go home, leaving their Ambassadors as their representatives. The Conference would ratify in a Three-Power Agreement all the decisions on which agreement had been reached, which would be helpful for future negotiations, and would give its blessing to the Three-Power Agreement when signed. Then work would be continued as favourable opportunity arose between the Three European Powers, the Conference remaining in being and in a position to square up any agreements reached.

M. Briand fully approved that procedure.

Signor Bordonaro also approved.

Mr. MacDonald asked if it would be proper for him to make an announcement to this effect in the House of Commons?

M. Briand said that he might make it in just the same language as he had just used. He had formulated the best conditions for the future of the Conference, and he himself saw no objection to an announcement of that course.

Mr. MacDonald said he would have to fit his statement<sup>1</sup> into the procedure

<sup>1</sup> Mr. MacDonald made this statement during the evening of April 10. After announcing that an agreement had been reached between Great Britain, the United States, and Japan on a naval programme including all categories of ships, Mr. MacDonald continued as follows: 'The differences in the naval requirements of France and Italy have proved to be intricate, and have not so far been resolved. At a meeting early this evening between the

of the House of Commons and would probably make it the same evening. He suggested that there should be a Meeting of the Heads of Delegations on the morrow and a Plenary Meeting to approve everything on Monday. There were certain matters to be settled up in the First Committee, and a meeting might be held on Saturday. The Plenary could then take place on Monday at 2.30. He thought, however, that the Secretary-General had better wait until after the Meeting of Heads of Delegations tomorrow before issuing a notice. On the following day he would propose to the Heads of Delegations that a drafting Committee of one jurist from each Power should be set up. A good deal of progress had already been made in drafting the arrangements between the United States, the United Kingdom and Japan. He doubted if it was realised what a large measure of agreement had already been reached.

The following Communiqué was issued:

‘The French, Italian and United Kingdom Delegations met at 10, Downing Street this evening at 6.30. The present state of negotiations was considered with a view to a report to the Heads of Delegations on Friday morning.’

French, the Italian, and the United Kingdom delegations, it was decided that, as such substantial agreement had been come to, it was thought unnecessary and undesirable to keep the full body of delegates sitting in London pending a settlement of difficulties which primarily concern these three delegations only; and so we shall propose, at a plenary session to be held early next week, that the agreements now come to shall be signed, and the Conference adjourned, on the understanding that France, Italy, and ourselves shall continue efforts to come to an agreement in unison with that which has been reached between the United States, Japan, and ourselves.’ *Parl. Deb.*, 5th Ser., vol. cccxxvii, col. 2473.

The agreements reached were embodied in the London Naval Treaty which was signed on April 22, 1930. For the text of the Treaty, see Appendix I to this volume. For the subsequent negotiations (down to March 11, 1931) with a view to obtaining a settlement of the differences between France and Italy, see Chapter V.

## CHAPTER IV

# Attitude of His Majesty's Government towards M. Briand's proposal for European Federal Union (May–September, 1930)

### INTRODUCTORY NOTE

ON September 5, 1929, at the Tenth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the League of Nations, M. Briand raised the question of European Federal Union in the following terms:

‘Now, with some slight misgiving, I might say with a feeling of anxiety, productive of a fear which you will forgive in me, I have to approach another problem. I have been associated of recent years with active propaganda in favour of an idea that is politely described as magnanimous—perhaps in order to avoid calling it rash. This idea, which was first conceived many years ago, which has haunted the imagination of philosophers and poets and has won from them a certain *succès d'estime*—this idea has now forged ahead in virtue of its own intrinsic worth and has been seen at last to supply the answer to a real need. Propagandists have united to spread it abroad, to establish it more firmly in the minds of the nations, and among those propagandists I stand confessed.

‘At the same time I have never closed my eyes to the difficulties of such an undertaking, nor failed to realise the doubtful expediency, for a statesman, of plunging into what might readily be termed such an adventure. But all man's greatest and wisest acts, I think, contain some element of madness or temerity. So I absolved myself in advance and went on; but I proceeded cautiously. I realise to the full the dangers of over-hasty action, and I do not deny that the problem is perhaps outside the scope of the League's programme; it bears a relation to that programme, however, for ever since the Covenant was framed the League has called for international reconciliation and urged the formation of regional associations, even on most comprehensive lines.

‘I think that among peoples constituting geographical groups, like the peoples of Europe, there should be some kind of federal bond; it should be possible for them to get in touch at any time, to confer about their interests, to agree on joint resolutions and to establish among themselves a bond of solidarity which will enable them, if need be, to meet any grave emergency that may arise. That is the link I want to forge.

‘Obviously this association will be primarily economic, for that is the most urgent aspect of the question, and I think we may look for success in that direction. Still, I am convinced that, politically and socially also, this federal link might, without affecting the sovereignty of any of the nations belonging

to such an association, do useful work; and I propose during this session to ask those of my colleagues here who represent European nations to be good enough to consider this suggestion unofficially and to submit it to their Governments for examination, so that those possibilities which I see in the suggestion may be translated into realities later—perhaps at the next session of the Assembly.<sup>2</sup>

M. Briand subsequently invited the representatives of the European States Members of the League to discuss this proposal with him at an informal meeting on September 9. The representatives agreed to recommend consideration of the proposal to their respective Governments, and M. Briand undertook (i) to provide a memorandum on the subject, (ii) to receive and report on the views of other Governments with regard to the proposal.

M. Briand circulated a memorandum (No. 186) on May 17, 1930, to the European States Members of the League.

### No. 185

#### *Record of a conversation between Mr. A. Henderson and M. Briand, May 9, 1930<sup>1</sup>*

[W 4922/451/98]

#### M. BRIAND'S SCHEME FOR A EUROPEAN FEDERAL UNION

M. Briand reminded Mr. Henderson that he had alluded to this matter at Geneva and had there undertaken to draw up a number of points which he would issue in the form of a questionnaire to other governments for their consideration and opinion. This questionnaire was now in proof form and he would be in a position to distribute it shortly. He would let Mr. Henderson have a copy as soon as he arrived in Geneva. The scheme, so far as it had yet taken definite shape, had been drawn up in such a way as to keep it within the framework of the League of Nations, and with due regard for the sovereign rights of individual states.

Mr. Henderson recalled that he had promised, when M. Briand had first broached his idea, that His Majesty's Government would examine it with the utmost consideration so soon as M. Briand was in a position to put forward some concrete ideas. He would now see that the promise was fulfilled and would himself read the document with the greatest interest as soon as M. Briand was ready to hand it to him. There was only one observation which he would make now, and that was to remind M. Briand that he had originally expressed to him the hope that there would be nothing in the scheme which would give it even the semblance of being directed against the United States of America.

M. Briand assured Mr. Henderson that there was nothing of the kind and that this consideration had been very much present to his mind throughout.

<sup>1</sup> This conversation took place in Paris.

*Mémorandum sur l'Organisation d'un Régime d'Union fédérale  
européenne<sup>1</sup>*

[W 5111/451/98]

Au cours d'une première réunion tenue le 9 septembre 1929, à Genève, à la demande du représentant de la France, les représentants qualifiés des vingt-sept États européens membres de la Société des Nations ont été appelés à envisager l'intérêt d'une entente entre Gouvernements intéressés, en vue de l'institution, entre peuples d'Europe, d'une sorte de lien fédéral qui établisse entre eux un régime de constante solidarité et leur permette, dans tous les cas où cela serait nécessaire, d'entrer en contact immédiat pour l'étude, la discussion et le règlement des problèmes susceptibles de les intéresser en commun.

Unanimes à reconnaître la nécessité d'un effort dans ce sens, les représentants consultés se sont tous engagés à recommander à leurs Gouvernements respectifs la mise à l'étude de la question qui leur était directement soumise par le représentant de la France et qu'aussi bien ce dernier avait déjà eu occasion, le 5 septembre, d'évoquer devant la dixième Assemblée de la Société des Nations.

Pour mieux attester cette unanimité, qui consacrait déjà le principe d'une union morale européenne, ils ont cru devoir arrêter sans délai la procédure qui leur paraissait la plus propre à faciliter l'enquête proposée: ils ont confié au représentant de la France le soin de préciser, dans un mémorandum aux Gouvernements intéressés, les points essentiels sur lesquels devait porter leur étude; de recueillir et d'enregistrer leurs avis; de dégager les conclusions de cette large consultation, et d'en faire l'objet d'un rapport à soumettre aux délibérations d'une conférence européenne, qui pourrait se tenir à Genève lors de la prochaine Assemblée de la Société des Nations.

Au moment de s'acquitter de la mission qui lui a été confiée, le Gouvernement de la République tient à rappeler la préoccupation générale et les réserves essentielles qui n'ont cessé de dominer la pensée de tous les représentants réunis à Genève le 9 septembre dernier.

La proposition mise à l'étude par vingt-sept Gouvernements européens trouvait sa justification dans le sentiment très précis d'une responsabilité collective en face du danger qui menace la paix européenne, au point de vue politique aussi bien qu'économique et social, du fait de l'état d'incoordination où se trouve encore l'économie générale de l'Europe. La nécessité d'établir un régime permanent de solidarité conventionnelle pour l'organisation rationnelle de l'Europe résulte en effet des conditions mêmes de la sécurité et du bien-être des peuples que leur situation géographique appelle à partager, dans cette partie du monde, une solidarité de fait.

Nul ne doute aujourd'hui que le manque de cohésion dans le groupement des forces matérielles et morales de l'Europe ne constitue, pratiquement, le

<sup>1</sup> A copy of this memorandum was given to His Majesty's Government by the French Ambassador on May 17. A translation of the memorandum was published as Cmd. 3595.

plus sérieux obstacle au développement et à l'efficacité de toutes institutions politiques ou juridiques sur quoi tendent à se fonder les premières entreprises d'une organisation universelle de la paix. Cette dispersion de forces ne limite pas moins gravement, en Europe, les possibilités d'élargissement du marché économique, les tentatives d'intensification et d'amélioration de la production industrielle, et par là même toutes garanties contre les crises du travail, sources d'instabilité politique aussi bien que sociale. Or, le danger d'un tel morcellement se trouve encore accru du fait de l'étendue des frontières nouvelles (plus de 20.000 kilomètres de barrières douanières) que les traités de paix ont dû créer pour faire droit, en Europe, aux aspirations nationales.

L'action même de la Société des Nations, dont les responsabilités sont d'autant plus lourdes qu'elle est universelle, pourrait être exposée en Europe à de sérieuses entraves, si ce fractionnement territorial ne trouvait au plus tôt sa compensation dans un lien de solidarité permettant aux nations européennes de prendre enfin conscience de l'unité géographique européenne et de réaliser, dans le cadre de la Société, une de ces ententes régionales que le Pacte a formellement recommandées.

C'est dire que la recherche d'une formule de coopération européenne en liaison avec la Société des Nations, loin d'affaiblir l'autorité de cette dernière, ne doit tendre et ne peut tendre qu'à l'accroître, car elle se rattache étroitement à ses vues.

Il ne s'agit nullement de constituer un groupement européen en dehors de la Société des Nations, mais au contraire d'harmoniser les intérêts européens sous le contrôle et dans l'esprit de la Société des Nations, en intégrant dans son système universel un système limité, d'autant plus effectif. La réalisation d'une organisation fédérative de l'Europe serait toujours rapportée à la Société des Nations, comme un élément de progrès à son actif dont les nations extra-européennes elles-mêmes pourraient bénéficier.

Une telle conception ne peut laisser place à l'équivoque, pas plus que celle dont procédait, sur un terrain régional encore plus restreint, la négociation collective des accords de Locarno qui ont inauguré la vraie politique de coopération européenne.

En fait, certaines questions intéressent en propre l'Europe, pour lesquelles les États européens peuvent sentir le besoin d'une action propre, plus immédiate et plus directe, dans l'intérêt même de la paix, et pour lesquelles, au surplus, ils bénéficient d'une compétence propre, résultant de leurs affinités ethniques et de leur communauté de civilisation. La Société des Nations elle-même, dans l'exercice général de son activité a eu plus d'une fois à tenir compte du fait de cette unité géographique que constitue l'Europe et à laquelle peuvent convenir des solutions communes dont on ne saurait imposer l'application au monde entier. Préparer et faciliter la coordination des activités proprement européennes de la Société des Nations serait précisément une des tâches de l'association envisagée.

Loin de constituer une nouvelle instance contentieuse pour le règlement des litiges, l'Association européenne, qui ne pourrait être appelée en pareille matière à exercer ses bons offices qu'à titre purement consultatif, serait sans

qualité pour traiter au fond des problèmes particuliers dont le règlement a été confié, par le Pacte ou par les Traités, à une procédure spéciale de la Société des Nations ou à toute autre procédure expressément définie. Mais, dans les cas mêmes où il s'agirait d'une tâche essentielle réservée à la Société des Nations, le lien fédéral entre États européens jouerait encore un rôle très utile en préparant l'atmosphère favorable aux règlements pacifiques de la Société ou en facilitant dans la pratique l'exécution de ses décisions.

Aussi bien le représentant de la France a-t-il eu souci, dès le début, d'éviter toute ambiguïté, lorsque, prenant l'initiative de la première réunion européenne, il a estimé qu'elle devait comprendre seulement les représentants d'États membres de la Société des Nations, et se tenir à Genève même, à l'occasion de la dixième Assemblée, c'est-à-dire dans l'atmosphère et dans le cadre de la Société des Nations.

Non plus qu'à la Société des Nations, l'organisation européenne envisagée ne saurait s'opposer à aucun groupement ethnique, sur d'autres continents ou en Europe même, en dehors de la Société des Nations.

L'œuvre de coordination européenne répond à des nécessités assez immédiates et assez vitales pour chercher sa fin en elle-même, dans un travail vraiment positif et qu'il ne peut être question de diriger, ni de laisser jamais diriger contre personne. Bien au contraire, cette œuvre devra être poursuivie en pleine confiance amicale, et souvent même en collaboration, avec tous autres États ou groupements d'États qui s'intéressent assez sincèrement à l'organisation universelle de la paix pour reconnaître l'intérêt d'une homogénéité plus grande de l'Europe, comprenant, au surplus, assez clairement les lois modernes de l'économie internationale pour rechercher, dans le meilleur aménagement d'une Europe simplifiée et par là même soustraite à la constante menace des conflits, les conditions de stabilité indispensables au développement de leurs propres échanges économiques.

La politique d'union européenne à laquelle doit tendre aujourd'hui la recherche d'un premier lien de solidarité entre Gouvernements d'Europe implique, en effet, une conception absolument contraire à celle qui a pu déterminer jadis, en Europe, la formation d'Unions douanières tendant à abolir les douanes intérieures pour élever aux limites de la communauté une barrière plus rigoureuse, c'est-à-dire à constituer en fait un instrument de lutte contre les États situés en dehors de ces Unions.

Une pareille conception serait incompatible avec les principes de la Société des Nations, étroitement attachée à la notion d'universalité qui demeure son but et sa fin alors même qu'elle poursuit ou favorise des réalisations partielles.

Il importe enfin de placer très nettement l'étude proposée sous cette conception générale, qu'en aucun cas et à aucun degré, l'institution du lien fédéral recherché entre Gouvernements européens ne saurait affecter en rien aucun des droits souverains des États membres d'une telle association de fait.

C'est sur le plan de la souveraineté absolue et de l'entière indépendance politique que doit être réalisée l'entente entre nations européennes. Il serait

d'ailleurs impossible d'imaginer la moindre pensée de domination politique au sein d'une organisation délibérément placée sous le contrôle de la Société des Nations, dont les deux principes fondamentaux sont précisément la souveraineté des États et leur égalité de droits. Et avec les droits de souveraineté, n'est-ce pas le génie même de chaque nation qui peut trouver à s'affirmer encore plus consciemment, dans sa coopération particulière à l'œuvre collective, sous un régime d'union fédérale pleinement compatible avec le respect des traditions et caractéristiques propres à chaque peuple?

C'est sous la réserve de ces observations et en s'inspirant de la préoccupation générale rappelée au début de ce mémorandum que le Gouvernement de la République, conformément à la procédure arrêtée à la première réunion européenne du 9 septembre 1929, a l'honneur de soumettre aujourd'hui à l'examen des Gouvernements intéressés un relevé des différents points sur lesquels ils sont invités à formuler leur avis.

## I

*Nécessité d'un Pacte d'Ordre général, aussi élémentaire fût-il, pour affirmer le Principe de l'Union morale européenne et consacrer solennellement le Fait de la Solidarité instituée entre États européens*

Dans une formule aussi libérale que possible, mais indiquant clairement l'objectif essentiel de cette association au service de l'œuvre collective d'organisation pacifique de l'Europe, les Gouvernements signataires s'engageraient à prendre régulièrement contact, dans des réunions périodiques ou extraordinaires, pour examiner en commun toutes questions susceptibles d'intéresser au premier chef la communauté des peuples européens.

### *Observations*

1. Les Gouvernements signataires apparaissant ainsi liés à l'orientation générale d'une certaine politique commune, le principe de l'union européenne se trouverait désormais placé hors de toute discussion et au-dessus de toute procédure d'application quotidienne: l'étude des voies et moyens serait réservée à la Conférence européenne ou à l'organisme permanent qui serait appelé à constituer le lien vivant de solidarité entre nations européennes et à incarner ainsi la personnalité morale de l'union européenne.
2. Ce pact initial et symbolique, sous le couvert duquel se poursuivraient dans la pratique la détermination, l'organisation et le développement des éléments constitutifs de l'association européenne, devrait être rédigé assez sommairement pour se borner à définir le rôle essentiel de cette association. (Il appartiendrait à l'avenir, s'il devait être favorable au développement de l'union européenne, de faciliter l'extension éventuelle de ce pacte de principe jusqu'à la conception d'une charte plus articulée.)
3. La rédaction du pacte européen devrait néanmoins tenir compte des réserves essentielles indiquées dans le présent mémorandum. Il importerait en effet de définir le caractère de l'Europe, considérée comme une entente régionale répondant aux dispositions de l'article 21 du Pacte de la Société des Nations et exerçant son activité dans le cadre de la Société des Nations. (Il serait



précisé, notamment, que l'Association européenne ne saurait se substituer à la Société des Nations dans les tâches confiées à celle-ci par le Pacte ou par les Traités, et que, même dans son domaine propre d'organisation de l'Europe, elle devrait encore coordonner son activité particulière avec l'activité générale de la Société des Nations.)

4. Pour mieux attester la subordination de l'Association européenne à la Société des Nations, le pacte européen serait réservé, à l'origine, aux États européens membres de la Société.

## II

### *Nécessité d'un Mécanisme propre à assurer à l'Union européenne les Organes indispensables à l'Accomplissement de sa Tâche*

A. *Nécessité d'un organe représentatif et responsable, sous forme d'institution régulière de la 'Conférence européenne'*, composée des représentants de tous les Gouvernements européens membres de la Société des Nations, et qui demeurerait l'organe directeur essentiel de l'Union européenne, en liaison avec la Société des Nations.

Les pouvoirs de cette Conférence, l'organisation de sa présidence et de ses sessions, régulières ou extraordinaires, devraient être déterminés à la prochaine réunion des États européens, qui aura à délibérer sur les conclusions du rapport d'enquête et qui, sous réserve des approbations gouvernementales ou ratifications parlementaires indispensables, devra assurer la mise au point du projet d'organisation européenne.

#### *Observation*

Afin d'éviter toute prédominance en faveur d'un des États d'Europe par rapport aux autres, la présidence de la Conférence européenne devrait être annuelle et exercée par roulement.

B. *Nécessité d'un organe exécutif, sous forme de Comité politique permanent*, composé seulement d'un certain nombre de membres de la Conférence européenne et assurant pratiquement à l'Union européenne son organisme d'étude en même temps que son instrument d'action.

La composition et les pouvoirs du Comité européen, le mode de désignation de ses membres, l'organisation de sa présidence et de ses sessions, régulières ou extraordinaires, devraient être déterminés à la prochaine réunion des États européens. L'activité de ce Comité, comme celle de la Conférence, devant s'exercer dans le cadre de la Société des Nations, ses réunions devraient avoir lieu à Genève même, où ses sessions régulières pourraient coïncider avec celles du Conseil de la Société des Nations.

#### *Observations*

1. En vue de soustraire le Comité européen à toute prédominance particulière, sa présidence devrait être exercée par roulement.
2. Le Comité ne pouvant comprendre qu'un nombre restreint de Représentants d'États européens membres de la Société des Nations garderait la possi-

bilité d'inviter à tout moment les représentants des autres Gouvernements européens, faisant ou non partie de la Société des Nations, qui seraient particulièrement intéressés à l'étude d'une question. Au surplus, la faculté lui serait formellement réservée, chaque fois qu'il le jugerait nécessaire ou opportun, d'inviter un représentant d'une Puissance extra-européenne, faisant ou non partie de la Société des Nations, à assister, ou même à participer (avec voix consultative ou délibérative) aux délibérations portant sur une question où elle se trouverait intéressée.

3. Une des premières tâches du Comité pourrait comporter :

d'une part, l'examen général de toute procédure de réalisation et d'application du projet envisagé, conformément aux données essentielles de la consultation des Gouvernements, et la recherche, à cet effet, des voies et moyens tendant à dégager techniquement les éléments constitutifs de la future Union fédérale européenne;

d'autre part, l'inventaire général du programme de coopération européenne, comprenant :

(a) l'étude des questions politiques, économiques, sociales et autres intéressant particulièrement la communauté européenne et non encore traitées par la Société des Nations;

(b) l'action particulière à exercer pour activer l'exécution par les Gouvernements européens des décisions générales de la Société des Nations.

4. Le Comité, après adoption du programme général de coopération européenne, pourrait confier l'étude de certains chapitres à des comités techniques spéciaux, en s'assurant des conditions nécessaires pour que le travail des experts fût toujours maintenu sous le contrôle et l'impulsion immédiate de l'élément politique, émanation directe des Gouvernements, qui demeurent solidairement responsables de la poursuite de leur entreprise internationale et qui peuvent seuls en assurer le succès sur le plan politique où elle trouve sa justification supérieure. (A cet effet, la présidence des Comités techniques pourrait être confiée, dans chaque cas particulier, à un homme d'Etat européen choisi, soit dans le sein, soit en dehors du Comité politique européen.)

C. *Nécessité d'un service de secrétariat*, aussi réduit fût-il à l'origine, pour assurer administrativement l'exécution des instructions du Président de la Conférence ou du Comité européen, les communications entre Gouvernements signataires du Pacte européen, les convocations de la Conférence ou du Comité, la préparation de leurs discussions, l'enregistrement et la notification de leurs résolutions, &c.

*Observations*

1. Au début, le service de secrétariat pourrait être confié au Gouvernement chargé, par roulement, de la présidence du Comité européen.
2. Le jour où la nécessité serait reconnue d'un Secrétariat permanent, le siège de ce Secrétariat devrait être le même que celui des réunions de la Conférence et du Comité, c'est-à-dire Genève.
3. L'organisation du service de secrétariat devrait toujours être examinée en tenant compte des possibilités d'utilisation, au moins partielle et temporaire, de services particuliers du Secrétariat de la Société des Nations.

### III

*Nécessité d'arrêter d'avance les Directives essentielles qui devront déterminer les Conceptions générales du Comité européen et le guider dans son Travail d'Étude pour l'Élaboration du Programme d'Organisation européenne*

(Ce troisième point pouvant être réservé à l'appréciation de la prochaine réunion européenne)

A. *Subordination générale du problème économique au problème politique.*—Toute possibilité de progrès dans la voie de l'union économique étant rigoureusement déterminée par la question de sécurité et cette question elle-même étant intimement liée à celle du progrès réalisable dans la voie de l'union politique, c'est sur le plan politique que devrait être porté tout d'abord l'effort constructeur tendant à donner à l'Europe sa structure organique. C'est sur ce plan encore que devrait ensuite s'élaborer, dans ses grandes lignes, la politique économique de l'Europe, aussi bien que la politique douanière de chaque État européen en particulier.

Un ordre inverse ne serait pas seulement vain, il apparaîtrait aux nations les plus faibles comme susceptible de les exposer, sans garanties ni compensation, aux risques de domination politique pouvant résulter d'une domination industrielle des États les plus fortement organisés.

Il est donc logique et normal que les sacrifices économiques à faire à la collectivité ne puissent trouver leur justification que dans le développement d'une situation politique autorisant la confiance entre peuples et la pacification réelle des esprits. Et même après la réalisation d'une telle condition de fait, assurée par l'établissement d'un régime de constante et d'étroite association de paix entre peuples d'Europe, encore faudrait-il l'intervention, sur le plan politique, d'un sentiment supérieur des nécessités internationales pour imposer aux membres de la communauté européenne, en faveur de la collectivité, la conception sincère et la poursuite effective d'une politique douanière vraiment libérale.

B. *Conception de la coopération politique européenne* comme devant tendre à cette fin essentielle: une fédération fondée sur l'idée d'union et non d'unité, c'est-à-dire assez souple pour respecter l'indépendance et la souveraineté nationale de chacun des États, tout en leur assurant à tous le bénéfice de la solidarité collective pour le règlement des questions politiques intéressant le sort de la communauté européenne ou celui d'un de ses membres.

(Une telle conception pourrait impliquer, comme conséquence, le développement général pour l'Europe du système d'arbitrage et de sécurité, et l'extension progressive à toute la communauté européenne de la politique de garanties internationales inaugurée à Locarno, jusqu'à intégration des accords ou séries d'accords particuliers dans un système plus général.)

C. *Conception de l'organisation économique de l'Europe* comme devant tendre à cette fin essentielle: un rapprochement des économies européennes réalisé sous la responsabilité politique des Gouvernements solidaires.

A cet effet, les Gouvernements pourraient fixer eux-mêmes, définitivement,

dans un acte d'ordre général et de principe qui constituerait un simple pacte de solidarité économique, le but qu'ils entendent assigner comme fin idéale à leur politique douanière (établissement d'un marché commun pour l'élévation au maximum du niveau de bien-être humain sur l'ensemble des territoires de la communauté européenne). A la faveur d'une telle orientation générale pourrait s'engager pratiquement la poursuite immédiate d'une organisation rationnelle de la production et des échanges européens, par voie de libération progressive et de simplification méthodique de la circulation des marchandises, des capitaux et des personnes, sous la seule réserve des besoins de la défense nationale dans chaque État.

Le principe même de cette politique douanière une fois consacré, et définitivement consacré, sur le plan de la politique générale des Gouvernements, l'étude des modalités et voies de réalisation pourrait être renvoyée tout entière à l'examen technique d'un Comité d'experts, dans les conditions prévues au titre II, B, observation 4.

#### IV

*Opportunité de réserver, soit à la prochaine Conférence européenne, soit au futur Comité européen, l'Étude de toutes Questions d'Application*

dont les suivantes:

A. *Détermination du champ de coopération européenne*, notamment dans les domaines suivants:

1. *Économie générale*.—Réalisation effective, en Europe, du programme établi par la dernière Conférence économique de la Société des Nations, contrôle de la politique des unions et cartels industriels entre différents pays; examen et préparation de toutes possibilités futures en matière d'abaissement progressif des tarifs, &c.

2. *Outillage économique*.—Réalisation d'une coordination entre les grands travaux publics exécutés par les États européens (routes à grand trafic automobile, canaux, &c.).

3. *Communications et Transit*.—Par voie de terre, d'eau et d'air: réglementation et amélioration de la circulation inter-européenne; coordination des travaux des commissions fluviales européennes; ententes entre chemins de fer; régime européen des postes, télégraphes et téléphones; statut de la radio-diffusion, &c.

4. *Finances*.—Encouragement du crédit destiné à la mise en valeur des régions d'Europe économiquement moins développées; marché européen; questions monétaires, &c.

5. *Travail*.—Solution de certaines questions de travail particulières à l'Europe, telles que le travail dans la batellerie fluviale et dans les verreries; ayant un caractère continental ou régional, telles que la réglementation des conséquences sociales de l'émigration inter-européenne (application d'un pays à un autre des lois sur les accidents du travail, les assurances sociales, les retraites ouvrières, &c.).

6. *Hygiène*.—Généralisation de certaines méthodes d'hygiène expérimentées par l'organisation d'hygiène de la Société des Nations (notamment, régénération des régions agricoles; application de l'assurance-maladie; écoles nationales d'hygiène; épidémiologie européenne; échanges de renseignements et de fonctionnaires entre services nationaux d'hygiène; coopération scientifique et administrative dans la lutte contre les grands fléaux sociaux, contre les maladies professionnelles et la mortalité infantile; &c.).

7. *Coopération intellectuelle*.—Coopération par les universités et académies; relations littéraires et artistiques; concentration des recherches scientifiques; amélioration du régime de la presse dans les relations entre agences et dans le transport des journaux, &c.

8. *Rapports interparlementaires*.—Utilisation de l'organisation et des travaux de l'Union Interparlementaire, pour le développement des contacts et échanges de vues entre milieux parlementaires des différents pays d'Europe (afin de préparer le terrain politique aux réalisations de l'Union européenne qui nécessiteraient des approbations parlementaires et, d'une façon générale, d'améliorer l'atmosphère internationale en Europe par la compréhension réciproque des intérêts et sentiments des peuples).

9. *Administration*.—Formation de sections européennes dans certains bureaux internationaux mondiaux.

. . . . .

B. *Détermination des méthodes de coopération européenne* dans les questions que retiendrait la Conférence européenne ou le Comité européen.

Il pourrait être opportun, suivant les cas :

Soit de créer des organismes de coordination et d'étude là où ils n'existent pas (par exemple pour l'outillage européen ou pour les diverses Commissions fluviales européennes).

Soit de seconder les efforts de la Société des Nations dans les questions qui font déjà l'objet de ses études méthodiques (en préparant, notamment, par des échanges de vues et des négociations amiables, l'entrée en vigueur, dans les relations des États d'Europe, des conventions établies ou des recommandations formulées par la Société des Nations).

Soit enfin de provoquer des conférences, européennes ou générales, de la Société des Nations dans les questions susceptibles d'être traitées par elle, mais qui ne l'ont pas encore été. (A toute conférence européenne les États extra-européens seraient invités à se faire représenter par des observateurs et toute convention qui serait établie par une conférence convoquée à la demande des États d'Europe, pour autant qu'elle ne serait pas strictement continentale par son objet, demeurerait ouverte à l'adhésion des États extra-européens).

C. *Détermination de tous modes de collaboration* entre l'Union européenne et les pays situés en dehors de cette union.

En sollicitant, sur les quatre points ci-dessus indiqués, l'avis des vingt-six Gouvernements européens dont il a reçu mandat d'enquête, le Gouverne-

ment de la République tient à formuler cette observation générale, qu'il a cru devoir s'attacher, pour des raisons purement pratiques, à une conception aussi élémentaire que possible de sa consultation: non qu'il entende limiter, dans ses vœux, les possibilités de développement futur d'une organisation fédérale de l'Europe, mais parce que, dans l'état actuel du monde européen et pour accroître les chances d'assentiment unanime à une première proposition concrète, susceptible de concilier tous intérêts et toutes situations particulières en cause, il importe essentiellement de s'en tenir aux données initiales de quelques vues très simples. Aussi bien est-il de bonne méthode de procéder du plus simple au plus complexe, en s'en remettant au temps du soin d'assurer, avec la vie, par une évolution constante et par une sorte de création continue, le plein épanouissement des ressources naturelles que l'Union européenne pourrait porter en elle-même.

C'est une telle conception qui guidait déjà le représentant de la France, quand, devant la première réunion européenne convoquée à Genève, il se bornait à suggérer, à titre immédiat, la recherche d'un simple lien fédéral à instituer entre Gouvernements européens membres de la Société des Nations pour assurer pratiquement leur coopération.

Il ne s'agit point, en effet, d'édifier de toutes pièces une construction idéale répondant abstraitement à tous les besoins logiques d'une vaste ébauche de mécanisme fédéral européen, mais, en se gardant au contraire de toute anticipation de l'esprit, de s'attacher pratiquement à la réalisation effective d'un premier mode de contact et de solidarité constante entre Gouvernements européens, pour le règlement en commun de tous problèmes intéressant l'organisation de la paix européenne et l'aménagement rationnel des forces vitales de l'Europe.

Le Gouvernement de la République attacherait du prix à recevoir avant le 15 juillet la réponse des Gouvernements consultés, avec toutes observations ou suggestions spontanées dont ils croiraient devoir accompagner leur communication. Il exprime le ferme espoir que ces réponses, inspirées du large souci de faire droit à l'attente des peuples et aux aspirations de la conscience européenne, fourniront les éléments d'entente et de conciliation permettant d'instituer, avec un premier embryon d'organisation fédérale, le cadre durable de cette coopération européenne dont le programme pourra être arrêté à la prochaine réunion de Genève.

L'heure n'a jamais été plus propice ni plus pressante pour l'inauguration d'une œuvre constructive en Europe. Le règlement des principaux problèmes, matériels et moraux, consécutifs à la dernière guerre aura bientôt libéré l'Europe nouvelle de ce qui grevait le plus lourdement sa psychologie, autant que son économie. Elle apparaît dès maintenant disponible pour un effort positif et qui réponde à un ordre nouveau. Heure décisive, où l'Europe attentive peut disposer elle-même de son propre destin.

S'unir pour vivre et prospérer: telle est la stricte nécessité devant laquelle se trouvent désormais les Nations d'Europe. Il semble que le sentiment des peuples se soit déjà clairement manifesté à ce sujet. Aux Gouvernements d'assumer aujourd'hui leurs responsabilités, sous peine d'abandonner au

risque d'initiatives particulières et d'entreprises désordonnées le groupement de forces matérielles et morales dont il leur appartient de garder la maîtrise collective, au bénéfice de la communauté européenne autant que de l'humanité.

PARIS, 1<sup>re</sup> Mai 1930

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*Sir E. Phipps (Vienna) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received May 26)*  
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VIENNA, May 26, 1930

My despatch No. 217.<sup>1</sup>

I asked Chancellor today what he thought of M. Briand's proposals. He replied speaking quite privately and confidentially that he did not believe in the possibility even of an economic European union. What he hoped for some day was an economic union of Central Europe.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

No. 188

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received June 2)*  
*No. 434 [W 5686/451/98]*

Sir,

BERLIN, May 28, 1930

I have the honour to report that I paid a visit to the Chancellor yesterday. I had not yet had the opportunity of making Dr. Brüning's acquaintance and had delayed asking him for an interview because I knew that his time had been so much taken up with internal affairs.

2. After some preliminary remarks I asked the Chancellor whether he or the German Government had formed any impression of M. Briand's recent memorandum on the federation of Europe. Dr. Brüning replied that this memorandum would be carefully studied by the competent departments of the German Government and that no definite views on the subject had yet been formed. Assuming that the political idea underlying the memorandum meant that the European nations must agree, as a pre-condition of an economic federation of Europe, that the present *status quo* as regards frontiers must be accepted, he said quite definitely that no Government in Germany, however socialist in complexion, could subscribe to such a condition. If it did, it would be swept away. The Western frontiers of Germany had been definitely accepted at Locarno, but, in the German view, Germany's Eastern frontiers, as at present drawn, could not be considered as fixed for all time.

3. The Chancellor then went on to discuss the economic aspect of M. Briand's proposals. Dr. Brüning said that he would welcome any scheme which would have the effect of lowering the tariff walls which had been erected round the different countries of Europe, but he pointed out that

absolute free trade between European nations might have serious disadvantages. To take, for example, commercial relations between Germany and Czechoslovakia. If the tariff barriers between these two countries were completely removed, Germany could not possibly compete with Czechoslovakia in the manufacture of similar articles produced in the two countries because of the lower wage levels and cost of production in Czechoslovakia. He was apprehensive that the United States would, owing to the saturation of the American market, eventually dump goods on an enormous scale in Europe. How could the latter protect herself against such action?

4. I told the Chancellor that I had no idea what view His Majesty's Government would take of M. Briand's memorandum, but that such English papers as I had read were not very encouraging regarding the prospects of success of M. Briand's proposals. Nor, with the exception of the 'Vorwärts' and the 'Vossische Zeitung' did the German press, as far as I could see, show any particular enthusiasm for the federation of Europe as sketched out by M. Briand.

5. I saw Herr von Schubert<sup>1</sup> to-day and repeated to him what the Chancellor had said to me yesterday with regard to M. Briand's memorandum. He confirmed Dr. Brüning's statement that the German Government had not yet had time to study the memorandum thoroughly. It had not been discussed by the Cabinet but, speaking personally, he was inclined to think that the view of the German Foreign Office would be similar to that expressed by the German Chancellor on the assumption that the memorandum was based on the idea that the nations of Europe were expected to accept the national frontiers as at present drawn. He did not see that any other deduction could be drawn from the memorandum. He again repeated what the Chancellor had said about the Eastern frontiers of Germany. These were absurd and were bound to come up for revision later on.

6. After telling Herr von Schubert that I had no idea of the views of my Government regarding M. Briand's memorandum, I asked him what would be the attitude of the German Government to M. Briand's proposals supposing that my Government did not feel able to join the proposed federation of Europe. He replied quite categorically that, in that case, M. Briand's proposal would have no interest for the German Government. That Government did not want, as he expressed it, 'to be faced by a continental block'. If the idea was to come to anything England must join. What view, moreover, would the Italians take of M. Briand's proposals?

7. There was, however, as Herr von Schubert expressed it, 'a very good kernel' in the memorandum, i.e. the economic aspect of the proposed federation of Europe was worthy of consideration. It was necessary that European nations should combine more than they were doing at present for, in that way, possibilities of conflict could be avoided. But he thought that an organisation such as that proposed by M. Briand sitting side by side with the organisation of the League of Nations at Geneva had an element of absurdity. He emphasised the fact that his remarks were purely personal and

<sup>1</sup> Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



promised to inform me in due course of the considered decision of the German Government in the matter. He also said that it would be of great interest to the German Government to have some indication of the views of His Majesty's Government on the subject.

8. My impression as a result of these two interviews, as well as of conversations which I have had with other prominent Germans on the subject, is that if M. Briand is aiming at obtaining 'security' through the recognition of and acceptance by all the States of Europe, including of course what may be termed the 'dissatisfied' States, of their present frontiers as finally fixed for all time, Germany will not come into the proposed federation of Europe. Her attitude to the proposal will also be influenced by that of Great Britain and Italy. But if she decides to stand out of the proposed federation of Europe she will find some difficulty in framing her reply having regard to her wish, on political and economic grounds, to stand well with France at the present moment.

I have, etc.,

HORACE RUMBOLD

No. 189

*Memorandum<sup>1</sup> on M. Briand's proposal for a European  
Federal Union*

[W 5585/451/98]

FOREIGN OFFICE, May 30, 1930

<sup>2</sup>

The Memorandum, for which M. Briand has kept Europe waiting all these months, is, at least at first sight, a surprising and disappointing work. It is permeated by a vague and puzzling idealism expressed in such phrases as 'collective responsibility in face of the danger which threatens the peace of Europe', 'need for a permanent *régime* of solidarity', and much else which may mean a great deal or may mean nothing at all. But M. Briand makes certain very definite proposals. The chief of these are for the agreement of all European Members of the League to draw up a Pact affirming the principle of the moral union of Europe; and for the creation of a 'European Association' of these States to express the idea of the establishment of a 'federal' system. This 'Association' is not to be taken as in any way derogating from the full political and economic sovereignty of its members, or as being in any sense directed against non-European States. M. Briand justifies his proposal by reference to Article 21 of the Covenant with its authorisation of such 'regional understandings as the Monroe Doctrine'. He prescribes for it three organs corresponding to the Assembly, Council and Secretariat of the League, which he would call, respectively, the European Conference, the Permanent Political Committee, and the Secretariat. These bodies would all

<sup>1</sup> This memorandum was drawn up for official use in the Foreign Office.

<sup>2</sup> The earlier paragraphs of this memorandum outlined M. Briand's introduction to his proposal at the Assembly of the League in September, 1929.

have their seat at Geneva, and the meetings of the Conference and the Committee would normally coincide with those of the Assembly and Council of the League of Nations.

It may be noted as of first and singular importance that M. Briand insists that in the work of this proposed 'European Association' economic problems should be subordinated to political problems. This curious proposal is in direct contradiction to that made in M. Briand's September speech, in which he had insisted that the Association would be 'primarily economic', and that the economic problem was both the most urgent and the easiest to settle. Moreover, the whole point of such schemes of Pan-European organisation as are identified with the names of Count Coudenhove-Kalergi<sup>1</sup> and other theorists is the rationalisation and unification of European resources and their protection against extra-European competition, particularly that of the United States of America. If all idea of a Pan-European economic union is to be dismissed as 'incompatible with the principles of the League of Nations', then all that M. Briand's proposals, if taken literally, would seem to amount to is the assertion of the principle 'Europe for the Europeans' and the attempt to remove European affairs from the immediate cognisance of the League of Nations, and to reserve them for discussion in the first place by the League's European Members, leaving to the League itself only the rôle of ultimate approval and supervision.

It certainly appears essential to consider sooner or later how M. Briand's proposals, if they could be carried out, would affect the prestige and utility of the League. There seems every reason to fear that in practice the League's work and prestige might be adversely affected. European affairs are the most interesting of the League's many political activities, and the removal of these from its general cognisance would certainly destroy much of the League's authority. Moreover, on many occasions it has been in the past of importance to draw the British Dominions and Asiatic and American States into an active participation in questions which under the new proposals might be reserved as European questions. M. Briand's proposed organisation could hardly fail to interfere with many of the practical activities already carried on by various organs of the League, and might well prove an embarrassing rival to it, while it is hard to see how it could, within a measurable period of time, become more efficient. In a word, if it did not actually embarrass and hamper the activities of the League, the European Conference, Permanent Committee and Secretariat would at best simply duplicate those activities.

It is probably more profitable to consider not what M. Briand literally says, but what his real intentions are. Two alternatives present themselves:

(1) It is conceivable (though very improbable) that M. Briand was not serious when he spoke of the urgency of economic reorganisation at Geneva last September; or (it may be from apprehension of British and American criticisms) he may indeed have been serious then, but has since changed his mind. In this case we are forced to take it that M. Briand is making his

<sup>1</sup> Count Coudenhove-Kalergi published in 1923 a book entitled *Pan-Europa* and founded a society named the 'Pan-European Union' for the advocacy of his ideas.

present proposals as a political move. He may think that the establishment of his 'European Association' would set a further seal on the sanctity of the present territorial and political organisation of Europe established by the Peace Treaties and post-War arrangements. It would be strange if he seriously believes that all or even the majority of European Powers would be likely to accept such a plan, which would offer most of them no advantages and would in their eyes appear merely to reinforce France's political hegemony in Europe. Perhaps, then, M. Briand calculates that the refusal, which is to be expected, of Germany, Italy and other Powers to entertain his proposals, ostensibly directed as they are towards a high moral ideal of stabilisation and co-operation, may both discredit the general policy of these countries in the eyes of the world, and provide him with convincing proofs on which future French Governments can dilate, that France, alone or chief of the European Powers, thinks and works for the salvation of Europe. All this is possible, perhaps even probable; it is typical of a certain kind of French policy, but it does not fit in with what we know of M. Briand. Almost alone among French politicians he has in recent years consistently shown himself a good European, a friend of peace and of the improvement of international relations. It would be disappointing to have to fall back on the conclusion that M. Briand had been persuaded or coerced into the view that all there is for him to work for now and in the future is the maintenance of France's political supremacy. Moreover the attempt is really too barefaced to be likely to succeed. Germany, Italy and other Powers are not likely to fall into the trap, if trap there be.

(2) It would be well, then, to assume that M. Briand is not animated by this cynical intention, but that on the contrary he genuinely desires to make the peoples and Governments of Europe understand that they have important common interests, and that they can greatly benefit both themselves and the world at large by forgetting their traditional conflicts and animosities and by cooperating more effectively to promote these interests. If this is really his intention, he is aiming at something more positive and practical than the vague political organisation outlined in his memorandum. Though he emphasises the necessity of political association as a preliminary to all European reorganisation, it may well be that what he has in mind is not only, perhaps not even primarily, further military and political security for France (though no doubt he does desire this) but also such regrouping and consolidation of European finance and industry as to assure France and the rest of Europe against the ever-growing strength of Non-European and especially American competition. This is primarily what has always been meant by the 'United States of Europe' or 'Pan-Europa' and without this it is hard to see that the word 'Pan-Europa' can mean anything at all. It is difficult to believe that M. Briand, who has repeatedly expressed his sympathy for the Pan-European idea, should not have something like this at the back of his mind; indeed, it is only the economic aspect of European reorganisation which could offer any attraction to Germany, Italy and many other European States, and if Europe is ever to be brought into a closer political formation it

can surely be only as a result of closer economic ties. It is true that M. Briand in his memorandum makes no proposal of the sort and even appears to veto the idea of the protection of Europe from extra-European competition, but it is interesting to observe that in the list of subjects which he draws up as appropriate for consideration by his European Association the first of the nine headings is that dealing with economics, and this is the only one of the nine categories which seems to contain anything of first importance. M. Briand under this heading puts down for discussion 'the effective realisation in Europe of the programme laid down by the last Economic Conference of the League of Nations; control of the policy of industrial unions and cartels between different countries; examination of and preparation for all possible future measures for the progressive reduction of tariffs, etc.'

This programme was often put forward in Geneva by Herr Stresemann and particularly in his last great speech before his death; and it undoubtedly has the support of a large body of opinion among political leaders in various countries. But so far the difficulties of reaching practical results have proved to be great. This may be the key to M. Briand's meaning when he speaks of 'the subordination in principle of the economic problem' to 'the principle of political cooperation'. He may mean that economic experts left to themselves will always haggle about conflicting vested interests and will never reach practical results; that until the political leaders of the governments concentrate attention on the overriding common interests which European countries share, there will be little hope for 'the effective realisation in Europe of the programme laid down by the last Economic Conference of the League'.

In any case, it is certain that some new impetus is required, if further progress in this direction is to be made. The difficulties at the Tariff Truce Conference and in regard to the ratification of the Import and Export Prohibitions Convention have shown how great are the obstacles to be overcome if any collective action for 'the progressive reduction of tariffs' is to be taken. It is equally certain that Great Britain has the greatest possible interest in securing practical results in this direction. Apart from collective tariff reduction, with regard to which the President of the Board of Trade has made a not wholly discouraging start, there is very much in 'the programme laid down by the last Economic Conference' the realisation of which would help both to promote British trade and to improve the prospects of peace in Europe.

This being so, we are entitled to think that M. Briand principally desires to make a new start in this regard, and to create machinery for the purpose of better economic and technical cooperation, setting up in the first place no more than a framework within which the economic reorganisation of Europe can develop as circumstances dictate. If this is in reality M. Briand's desire, there is no doubt that his success would promote the interests of this country and the Empire and that His Majesty's Government could, so far as the main principle is concerned, go at least some distance with him.

Moreover, it may well be that M. Briand's purpose could be at least in part achieved not by the creation of any new and elaborate machinery of the

kind which he proposes, but by the establishment of European Committees of the Financial, Economic and other technical Organisations of the League. There are already precedents for (temporary) Committees of this kind; they would be far cheaper and more effective than M. Briand's new organs, and they would not be open to the objections of general principle mentioned above.

The above argument is based, however, on speculation, and perhaps idle speculation. (It is, however, interesting to note that the view here submitted of M. Briand's intentions has been arrived at independently by various readers of the document, and was mentioned as his own to Sir R. Vansittart by the Spanish Ambassador in London.) Unfortunately, at present no adequate information is available as to the way in which European Governments are receiving M. Briand's plan for the salvation of Europe. Press comments are dealt with in a separate memorandum annexed to this paper. As a whole they have been, when not directly hostile, at least unfavourable or sceptical. Even in France itself the plan has met with far from unanimous approval, and the British press, with very few exceptions, has dismissed it as either Utopian or dangerous.

It is submitted that the attitude of His Majesty's Government towards M. Briand's proposals should be one of caution, though cordial caution. Neither the real meaning of the proposals nor the real nature of M. Briand's intentions can be elucidated without much further information than has yet arrived from Paris and other European centres. The proposals in the first place concern Continental Europe more directly and fully than they do this country. It therefore appears right and proper and politically advisable that His Majesty's Government should not commit themselves to any definite view of the proposals till the countries primarily concerned have spoken their minds. But at the same time it is urged that His Majesty's Government, while non-committal as to acceptance of the proposals themselves, should show themselves entirely sympathetic towards the principle invoked and stressed by M. Briand of the importance of the friendly cooperation of European States to promote their common interests. An expression of sympathy in very general terms would particularly seem called for (1) because M. Briand is an old and valued friend of this country and one of the few good 'Europeans' in France, and anything which could be considered by other countries as a snub to him on the part of His Majesty's Government would undermine not only his own position but the whole cause of European cooperation. (2) If the proposals are impracticable, as in part they appear to be, there is surely no reason why His Majesty's Government should take upon themselves the onus of turning down something which Germany and Italy, who are far more directly concerned, will do themselves. (3) If, however, the proposals are capable of being used to make a new start on practical lines in the improved economic (and perhaps subsequently also political) cooperation, opposition on the part of His Majesty's Government might at this stage do real harm. On this hypothesis what would seem necessary would be careful study of the course of events coupled with a discriminating sympathy for all such reorganisation of Europe as is not in unjustified contra-

vention of British rights and interests, of the peculiar and indissoluble connexion of the British Isles with the world-wide territories of the British Empire and of the prestige and efficiency of the League of Nations which is the sheet anchor of British policy.

To sum up, what is in the first place needed is fuller information as to M. Briand's real intentions and the attitude of European Governments. As this information comes in, various questions will arise requiring close departmental consideration. In any case, it would appear both unsatisfactory and unwise to attempt to give any complete or final answer to the memorandum by July 15, the date mentioned by M. Briand.

It is suggested that His Majesty's Government should base their policy on the following principles:

i. We can agree to no proposals which in practice (whatever their intention) may damage the prestige and authority of the League;

ii. If, therefore, there is to be new machinery, it should be built into the existing framework of the League;

iii. We warmly desire to improve the cooperation between European countries for the promotion of their common interests, or<sup>1</sup> will help to bring it about;

iv. We cannot, however, help to create any political or economic group which could in any way be regarded as hostile to the American or any other continent, or which would weaken our political cooperation with the other members of the British Commonwealth;

v. We believe that in economic and technical matters much might be done which would not be open to objection in these respects which would promote British interests;

vi. We must not antagonise Latin-America, Asia or any other section of the League. This being so, M. Briand's proposals should not be discussed in a 'European' Conference run as a rival meeting outside the Assembly, but rather in the Committees of the Assembly itself.

If these principles are accepted, it is suggested that His Majesty's Government, if they reply before or on July 15, should confine themselves to an expression of warm sympathy with the high ideals of European cooperation and to the assurance that they will give these and all future proposals from the French Government the fullest consideration both on their own part and in consultation with His Majesty's Governments in the Dominions. There might be added the observation that, as M. Briand's proposals affect either directly or indirectly all members of the League of Nations, His Majesty's Government assume that M. Briand intends to place them on the Agenda of the Assembly either this year or in 1931.

## (ii) *European Press Comments on the Briand Memorandum*

### *The British Press*

M. Briand's proposals have not had a good press in London. Papers of all shades of political opinion, while paying tribute to the excellence of M.

<sup>1</sup> This word should probably read 'and'.

Briand's intentions, have condemned his scheme as likely to usurp the functions of the League of Nations and have accused it of vagueness. So vague indeed does it appear that some papers feel some practical objective must be hidden behind its specious wording and consider that what M. Briand is really arriving at is a guarantee of French 'security' on the lines of the Geneva Protocol.

It is generally felt that the relations of this country with the rest of the British Commonwealth must be the primary consideration of His Majesty's Government and that the United Kingdom will therefore be unable to co-operate wholeheartedly in M. Briand's scheme, even though it is probable that the abstention of this country will, to a large extent, wreck the scheme.

#### *The German Press*

M. Briand's proposals have not had a good reception in the German press for two reasons: (1) because of the nature and spirit of the proposals themselves and (2) owing to the supposed rejection of the scheme by the British, Italian and American press. Hostility is greatest in the press of the Right of which the opinion is that although, at first sight, the proposals appear to be conciliatory they are actually aimed at establishing the hegemony of France in Europe. The Centre press, in view of the Chancellor's position, shows that it has been warned to observe caution in its comments. The Democratic papers are generally lukewarm and remark that the scheme is doomed if England holds aloof from it. The Social Democratic press is more sympathetic and warns the Government not to commit the mistake of peremptorily rejecting discussion.

#### *The Italian Press*

An evidently inspired editorial of 'Il Piccolo' whose editor is in close touch with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is definitely hostile to M. Briand's proposals. With the exception of an article in the Vatican organ 'Osservatore Romano' other press comment is similarly unfavourable and is of opinion that M. Briand's scheme would result in perpetuating the *status quo* and would establish a federation not of free sovereign states but of satellites under French predominance. It is feared that the suggested federation would constitute a very bad duplicate of the League of Nations which would weaken the League, drive the United States further from Geneva and provoke the withdrawal of the South American States.

#### *The Spanish Press*

Spanish opinion is not much interested in the scheme, for domestic problems are at present of more importance than problems of foreign policy. In any case the aspirations of Spain are directed rather towards increasing her cultural predominance in Latin America than towards playing a large role in Europe. The present Government is unlikely to commit the country to any very definite line.

#### *The Swiss Press*

The Swiss press is studiously courteous but sceptical to the verge of hostility. It fears that however much M. Briand may affirm that his scheme will be

directed against no country or group outside Europe and that it will work within the framework of the League it may in practice prove impossible to prevent a clash between them.

#### *The Austrian Press*

Austria is 'Pan-European minded' but the Austrian press also sees the difficulties before M. Briand's scheme. For Austria as for other European states the only real attraction of Pan-Europa would be its economic side but this, for the moment, M. Briand subordinates to the political side.

#### *The Belgian Press*

The Belgian press has refrained from expressing any very definite views partly because public opinion is little interested, partly because of the limited encouragement given to the scheme by the British press and partly owing to the fear felt in Belgium of any scheme liable to engender close relations between France and Germany. It seems probable that the Belgian reply will be polite, sympathetic but non-committal.

#### *The French Press*

All the doubts felt by the European press are brought out by the press in France itself. Very widespread admiration is however expressed for M. Briand's attempt to develop his policy from Locarno, through the Kellogg Pact and the liquidation of the war to ensuring lasting peace by safeguarding the rights and interests of all the countries in Europe.

The Press however notes the cold reception accorded to the scheme by the press in the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy and the United States. The attitude of the United Kingdom in no way surprises them for they realise the difficulty of deciding whether this country belongs to Europe or to the British Commonwealth. The scepticism of the rest of Europe in no way surprises the French press for they are used to seeing France accused of militarism and imperialism however idealistic her attitude may be. They hope however that sceptical Europe will appreciate the difference between M. Briand's peaceful and idealistic proposals and M. Mussolini's warlike speeches in North Italy. 'Volonté' draws the moral from this and says that while England is preoccupied with the British Empire and Italy in sabre-rattling, the only sure way to peace in Europe is to be found in a Franco-German entente and that the most important factor will be the attitude of Germany.

### **No. 190**

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received May 31)*

*No. 99 Telegraphic [W 5667/451/98]*

ROME, May 30, 1930

Your telegram No. 58 and my despatches Nos. 369 and 382.<sup>1</sup>

Minister for Foreign Affairs told me he has not yet had time to examine

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.



M. Briand's scheme in detail but that Italy would certainly not accept it and he had already been authorised by Signor Mussolini to reject it. But he would only do this after a decent delay and with every consideration for M. Briand's feelings. He added he would be extremely grateful for any private indication of views and intentions of His Majesty's Government in the matter.

## No. 191

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received June 16)*

*No. 468 [W 6129/451/98]*

Sir,

BERLIN, June 13, 1930

In a conversation which I had with Herr von Schubert to-day reference was made to M. Briand's scheme for the federalisation of Europe. I enquired whether the German Government had yet come to any definite decision as to the attitude they propose to adopt towards this scheme.

2. Herr von Schubert replied in the negative, though, as he at the same time mentioned that he was going to discuss with the Minister for Foreign Affairs a paper on the subject which he held in his hand, I gathered that he was already in possession of the preliminary views of his experts.

3. Herr von Schubert again expressed eagerness to know the views of His Majesty's Government on M. Briand's proposals. These views, he said, would be the determining factor for Germany. He repeated that he thought that M. Briand's scheme had merits as regards its economic aspect, but his Government did not see the necessity for subordinating the economic side of the proposals to the political side as proposed in M. Briand's memorandum.

4. The Secretary of State went on to say that he could not see how an organisation could function side by side with the League of Nations at Geneva even if it only dealt with European affairs. Moreover, the fact that M. Briand's memorandum did not provide for the inclusion of Russia and Turkey amongst the European States seemed rather to vitiate his proposals.

5. I drew Herr von Schubert's attention to an article on the subject contributed by Mr. Winston Churchill to the monthly periodical 'Nord und Süd' which is edited by Professor Stein. As far as I could see it followed the lines of Mr. Amery's recent address at the Pan-European Conference here, which might be summed up by saying that the abolition or modification of tariff barriers on the European continent could not but be of benefit to the United Kingdom. But, whilst the United Kingdom might welcome any steps in that direction, it would not necessarily follow that she could enter a federation of Europe such as proposed. These were, of course, the personal views of statesmen who are not in office.

I have, etc.,

HORACE RUMBOLD

*Mr. Newton (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received July 21)*  
*No. 588 [W 7414/451/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, July 16, 1930

In calling at the Foreign Office yesterday evening to receive from the Secretary of State a copy of the German reply to M. Briand's memorandum on the federation of Europe, I asked Herr von Bülow<sup>1</sup> whether there were any points on which he would care to give me further information than that contained in the written reply itself.

2. Herr von Bülow observed that there was much in the French memorandum with which the German Government were not in agreement, but they had been careful to avoid any argumentative or aggressive language. Although the French memorandum mentioned that the problems besetting Europe to-day had been intensified by the creation of thousands of miles of new frontiers, the German Government had resisted any temptation to point out that for this it was the creators of the new frontiers who were to blame. But Germany had refused to consider a Locarno Treaty for her eastern frontiers and could not accept any commitments which would stereotype those frontiers. Nevertheless no direct reference thereto was made in the German reply, which was couched in plain and sober language intended to show the sincerity of Germany's desire to co-operate on practical lines.

3. The German Government were inclined to think that progress could best be made if the economic rather than the political problems were tackled first. They thought, moreover, that it might be better not to be too ambitious at the outset, but to start with the easier problems first and then proceed to the more difficult ones. Constructive work need not be centralised, but could be begun at a number of different centres or points of departure. Questions of common interest to one set of countries might not be of the same interest for another set of countries, so that a solution applicable to the one case might not be appropriate, or even required, in the other. There might be questions particularly interesting England and Germany, where, for example, labour conditions were similar, but which it would be unprofitable to discuss with Czechoslovakia where labour standards were quite different. On the other hand England might be indifferent to other questions which would be of common interest to Germany and Czechoslovakia.

4. Finally, Herr von Bülow emphasised the point mentioned in the German reply that nothing should be done to detract from the influence of the League of Nations or to prejudice the growth of that influence, and in particular he deprecated any unnecessary duplication of the League machinery.

5. The German note has been very well received in the press. The allusions to the necessity of eventual political readjustments are considered satisfactory and adequate by the organs of the Right, and the clear indication

<sup>1</sup> Secretary of State at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in succession to Herr von Schubert on the latter's appointment as German Ambassador at Rome.

of Germany's determination to continue the policy of conciliation and co-operation initiated by Herr Stresemann is welcomed in the press of the Centre and the Left. A translation<sup>1</sup> of an interesting article which has appeared in to-day's 'Berliner Tageblatt' is enclosed with this despatch.

6. I have not sent you the text of the German note since I understand that you will already have received it from the German Embassy in London on the day on which it was handed to the French Government.

I have, etc.,

B. C. NEWTON

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

### No. 193

*Memorandum on the Proposals made by M. Briand on behalf of the French Government for the Organisation of a System of European Federal Union<sup>1</sup>*

[W 5585/451/98]

FOREIGN OFFICE, July 3, 1930

#### *M. Briand's Purpose and Motive*

2. The fundamental proposition upon which the above proposals are based is that something like a federal organisation of Europe is needed in the interests both of the peace and of the social and economic well-being of the continent. M. Briand desires to turn the eyes of the peoples of Europe from the traditional hostilities of the past and from alleged conflicts of interests and to fix them instead on those more important common interests which to-day they share.

3. This is entirely in keeping with M. Briand's general policy in the last ten years. He believes in peace, both for his country and for the world, and he sees that Europe is still the chief probable storm centre of war. He therefore wishes to strengthen international safeguards against European war, and for that purpose to increase European co-operation. Some of his colleagues are, no doubt, also actuated by the desire to restore the economic balance between Europe and America.

4. It is plain that this main purpose must receive the support of any British Government to-day. More than ever before peace is the first of British interests, and especially peace in Europe; while any diminution of the barriers to European international trade must help our exports to what still remains the greatest, as it is the nearest and in some ways most easily expandible, of our markets.

5. While, therefore, we must do nothing to hamper our freedom to develop our political and economic co-operation with the Dominions in any way which the future may show to be wise, it is, I submit, our duty to assure

<sup>1</sup> This memorandum was prepared in the Foreign Office for submission by Mr. A. Henderson to the Cabinet. In a covering note Mr. Henderson stated that M. Briand had informed him that he expected in reply from His Majesty's Government only a very general expression of view.

<sup>2</sup> The first paragraph of the memorandum summarized M. Briand's proposals.

M. Briand that we are in full sympathy with the fundamental purpose of the policy of closer European co-operation for which he stands.

*The Field of Application for M. Briand's Policy*

6. M. Briand's basic conception is primarily political. There are, moreover, passages in his memorandum which deal with the political aspects of his main idea, which reiterate his familiar arguments about 'security', and which go far beyond what he said when he first launched his campaign at Geneva last September. He then laid stress almost exclusively upon economic questions, whereas he now says that economic questions must be subordinate to political considerations. I will discuss what he really means by this in a moment. But in any case the fact that he puts forward this view merely makes it the more significant that in his memorandum his actual programme of practical work, of co-operative inter-governmental study and action, is predominantly economic. Thus this programme includes these categories of items:—

- General economics.
- Economic equipment.
- Communications and transit.
- Finance.
- Labour.
- Health.
- Intellectual co-operation.
- Inter-parliamentary relations.
- Administration.

7. The predominance of economic items is not an accident. It is plain that almost all the non-economic relations of Governments and nations—for example, the prevention of war, settlement of disputes, &c.—are universal in their interest and must be dealt with on a universal basis. Even intellectual co-operation and health are universal rather than continental. This is true of economic relations in a far less degree. Moreover, as M. Briand points out, the reasons for closer economic co-operation in Europe are constantly becoming stronger. Trade barriers are higher and more numerous than ever before; still more important, the technical developments of industry have constantly increased the advantage of large-scale production (and therefore of secure access to large markets). Moreover, apart from the actual waste involved in the present small units, the dangers resulting from the great disparity between the great unit of the United States and the small ones of Europe become more evident. And this, the central international problem in the economic sphere, is overwhelmingly a European question. There is nothing elsewhere comparable to the combination in Europe of advanced industrial development and small tariff units. It is therefore natural that it is principally in respect of economic relations that M. Briand hopes to find scope for continental European co-operation. And in fact his whole programme can be said to centre round 'the effective realisation in Europe of the programme laid down by the last Economic Conference of the League'.

### *Principles of Application*

8. In various parts of his memorandum M. Briand lays stress on three principles which are to govern the practical application of his policy of closer European co-operation. These are—

- (i) 'The subordination of the economic problem' to the political problem.
- (ii) The European Union should be 'elastic enough to respect the independence and national sovereignty of each State'.
- (iii) Closer European co-operation should in no way hamper or impede the work of the League of Nations, or diminish the authority and prestige of its institutions.

The meaning and results of these three principles require to be examined.

### *The Subordination of the Economic to the Political Problem*

9. It is at first sight strange that M. Briand should emphasise the principle that progress towards economic union can only follow progress towards political union. Is he simply taking one more opportunity of enunciating the familiar thesis that more 'security' in the military sense is required before closer international co-operation of any kind is possible? There are passages in his memorandum which would bear out this interpretation.

10. But there is another explanation which, in the light of recent experience appears more probable. In the economic work of the League of Nations it has been shown that existing national economic policies are so strongly buttressed by vested interests in the different countries that there is little hope of securing change unless economic are reinforced by political motives; unless, that is to say, Ministers of Commerce are supported and influenced by Foreign Ministers, who are determined to realise an ideal of greater international solidarity. For the realisation of his programme, M. Briand proposes to associate economic and political authorities, and he proposes that, in their joint deliberations, political considerations should be held to be supreme. It is fair to conclude that he means, *not* that the closer economic co-operation must wait for greater security, but that existing European security justifies, and would be increased by, closer economic co-operation.

11. If this interpretation is correct (and the passage on tariff policy of p. 11<sup>1</sup> of the memorandum appears to show that it certainly *is* correct), M. Briand's first principle is not open to objection. On the contrary, it would offer a powerful, and perhaps an indispensable, assistance to the economic work of the League, to which His Majesty's Government rightly attach so much importance.

### *Respect for Independence and Sovereignty of each State*

12. By his second principle of application, M. Briand probably means to make it clear that he does not propose the creation of a European 'super-State'.

In fact, the agreements he suggests would, like all treaties, limit the

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to Section III C of the memorandum.

‘sovereignty’ of the signatory States, and would do so in a particularly important manner. But they would not create a ‘super-State’; they would create no organ with supernational authority; they would, on the contrary, adhere to the method of voluntary co-operation, by which the League now works.

13. This principle therefore requires no further comment, except to point out that it would leave the new European union to face undiminished the formidable difficulties by which the League has been impeded in securing practical results.

#### *The Relations of the European Union to the League*

14. M. Briand’s third principle—that his European Union must not hinder the work or diminish the prestige of the League of Nations—requires more detailed examination, for it touches the central principle of the foreign policy of His Majesty’s Government.

15. There is no doubt that M. Briand’s assurances are genuine. There would seem to be equally no doubt that they are in vain. His European Union, if it were given the form which he proposes, could not fail both to hinder the work and diminish the authority of the League.

16. For M. Briand proposes to set up a standing conference to meet each year at Geneva in September, and a permanent executive committee to meet at the same periods as the Council; and—

- (i) Neither conference nor committee will derive its authority in any way from the Covenant or from Part XIII of the Treaty of Versailles (Constitution of the International Labour Office). They will be in no way controlled by the prescriptions or subject to the rules and safeguards of the Covenant.
- (ii) Since they will be self-constituted, they will only relate their work, in its universal aspects, to the policies and interests of other countries in so far as they decide to do so by virtue of spontaneous and specific decisions. It will not be by virtue of rights enjoyed, or through machinery partly controlled by those other States.
- (iii) They will be in no way organically connected or co-ordinated with the League, or with any general institutions.
- (iv) The purpose of this independent organisation is to enable the conference and committee to deal with European problems, *or European aspects of universal problems*, and to base agreements upon specifically European interests, without being subject to the control or veto of non-European Powers.

17. Since this is so, it follows that the new European organisation cannot stop short at a conference and committee and rely on the League for the services of its secretariat and its technical committees. If the purpose in view is to make the supreme authorities for this work independent of the League in order that they may be free to proceed with negotiations of a kind which would be vetoed by the League authorities, how is it possible that the League Secretariat and League technical committees, both supported by the general League budget, should be utilised to prepare and secure practical effect to such negotiations? How can the League call conferences to secure conventions

to embody a policy which *ex hypothesi* could not be developed if subject to the supreme control of the League Council and Assembly?

A European conference and committee must, therefore, have their work prepared by their own permanent officials and their own expert committees; and they must call their own conferences and negotiate their own conventions. The organisation must be parallel and fully equipped throughout, and as the problems included by M. Briand in his programme are the same in character as those dealt with by something like half the League organisation, the mechanism would require, if the work is to be adequately prepared, to be more or less as large and as expensive as the relevant technical sections of the League Secretariat and Labour Office.

We must, therefore, apparently imagine a European Assembly, a European Council, a European Economic Committee, Financial Committee, Transit Committee (to say nothing of Labour, Health and Intellectual co-operation questions), and a host of more specialised sub-committees meeting at Geneva and consisting presumably of the same persons who are the European members of the corresponding League bodies and studying the same problems as the League. But they would be all both formally and really outside the League; for they would not be subject in any way to the control of the League authorities; would be served by a separate secretariat; and have their expenses met from other sources than the League budget.

18. Such an organisation is open to the following objections:—

- (i) By duplicating international machinery it would create institutions that could hardly fail to become a rival to the League. This would be both dangerous and wrong.
- (ii) It would mean at least a considerable additional expense.
- (iii) It would be wasteful, for it would divide the competent personnel of the existing secretariat into two non-co-operating groups.
- (iv) It would create an impossible problem of co-ordination between the new Union and the League.
- (v) Indeed, its long period effect would be even worse than this. For in the nature of the case, for each of the particular problems to be dealt with ('prohibitions', treatment of foreigners, tariff agreements, veterinary regulations, &c.), the time at which they are ripe for a purely European treatment, if that is to be arranged, is somewhat earlier than that at which more universal agreements can be reached. Thus, the pioneer work will be done by the European organisation. The logical consequence would be to transfer the best and the bulk of the League personnel, and devote most of the meetings of the expert committees, to the new external European organisation, leaving the League with the mere shell, with a largely reduced mechanism, following behind, and from time to time trying to universalise an agreement already concluded within Europe by an external organisation.
- (vi) If the general activity of the League were so restricted, if it were so divorced from the bulk of current business, it would undoubtedly

gravely weaken the organisation and diminish the authority of its Assembly and its Council, and might thus leave them unequal to the task of maintaining world peace when need arose.

- (vii) It might—and probably would—give new strength both to the pan-American movement and to the Asiatic movement against Western domination. As a result, movements and problems which might have been, and should have been, universal will become regional. Unnecessary regional and local difficulties will be created. There will be a conflict between the regional and the central, in which the latter would constantly tend to be weaker. More and more the League would tend, both in economic problems and in questions involving dangers of war, to come in at a later and too late a stage. We should have, more remotely, but ultimately on a larger scale, the same kind of danger which comes from ‘alliances’ endangering the League’s overriding authority. If the League’s influence is not a factor in the developing life of the world out of which the forces making for peace or war grow, it will certainly be impotent to stop the consequences.
- (viii) If these regionalising tendencies lead to a clash of economic interests, organised on continental lines, they would involve at least a danger to the peace of the world. If they led to the creation of effective European, Pan-American, Russo-Asiatic unions, each equipped with an organisation absorbing the bulk of the work on practical and current problems, such a development might clearly endanger the cohesion of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

#### *Conclusion concerning the European Union and the League*

19. We are thus forced to the conclusion that M. Briand’s proposals constitute a serious danger to the League. It is therefore, I submit, the duty of His Majesty’s Government to oppose them in their present form and to consider whether M. Briand’s purpose of securing closer European co-operation for the promotion of European interests cannot be secured by some method that is not open to the same objections.

#### *Regionalising within the League*

20. I suggest that such a method can be found. I believe regional or continental interests may be dealt with by regional machinery within the framework of the League, and that in this way the desirable purpose of M. Briand’s plan may be achieved without the risks which his actual proposals would involve.

21. To illustrate my meaning, I will take an example of an economic problem which might easily create a real or apparent conflict of interests between a European Union and outside countries—the making of a differential tariff. It is obvious that it is of the utmost importance that any such European policy should be so developed and negotiated as not to be regarded as a hostile conspiracy by other countries. If this is possible, it is possible



within the full framework of the League and by a method which the League has already, in fact, adopted.

22. At the last Assembly proposals for a so-called 'Tariff Truce' were put forward by the President of the Board of Trade. These proposals were adopted, and in due course a conference was convened in order to arrest the increase of tariffs for a time and in that time to negotiate closer tariff co-operation. All countries were invited, but by a process of self-selection the conference became European, for all European countries except Russia and Albania sent delegates, while only two non-European countries did so. What followed is even more striking. A Commercial Convention providing, within limits, a certain temporary stabilisation was combined with a Programme of Negotiations. The signatories of one or both include practically all Europe (twenty-three countries already) and *no* country outside Europe. The range of subjects includes almost all the most important economic problems on which the League is working and corresponds closely with those included in the French memorandum. The subsequent negotiations are entirely in the hands of the signatory, *i.e.* European, States, for only those States participate, unless they agree to invite others.

23. At the same time, this essentially European work is in a real sense 'within the framework of the League'. For it has developed in accordance with a programme approved by the full Assembly; the European composition of the series of conferences has resulted from a process of self-selection; the Assembly and Council will be informed of progress and will control procedure, both by decisions as to convocation and by budget provision; the organs of the League, including both Secretariat and technical committees, and these only, will be utilised; and, lastly, the results of the limited negotiations are to be reviewed by a 'universal' conference.

24. We have, therefore, already started on a 'European' task closely similar to that proposed in the memorandum and are committed to finding appropriate methods and machinery within the League organisation. This task, moreover, is almost identical with that discussed in M. Briand's memorandum, so far as economic questions are concerned, and it is with economic questions, as explained above, that it is predominantly concerned.

25. These 'Tariff Truce' negotiations furnish the best example of how machinery can be provided within the framework of the League for dealing with matters of European interest. But they are by no means the only example. The European Health Conference at Warsaw in 1922; the Coal Mining Hours negotiations now being conducted in Geneva; the reconstruction of Hungary and Austria—these are some of a number of other cases which could be cited.

26. I submit that this League procedure and mechanism, developed on the lines laid down by the last Assembly, is capable of exploring and exploiting every possibility of securing practical results for European continental agreements, while still retaining the power of restraint against proposals that would create hostility in outside countries.

27. Moreover, this procedure and mechanism could be so developed as to

embody what is sound in M. Briand's plan. Thus (to continue my example of the Tariff Truce negotiations):—

- (i) Meetings of the signatories (European) of the March Convention (with other countries when they decided to invite them) would take place as arranged, under League convocation and arrangements made by the League Secretariat and paid for (as far as Secretariat services are concerned) from the League budget.
- (ii) Similarly the League Technical Committees should, meeting as such, prepare the work and should arrange, as they find convenient, for sub-committees consisting of European members only.
- (iii) Reports would, as on all other work, come before the Council and Assembly who would exercise the normal control, through comment, convocation and budget provision.
- (iv) The results would (as provided in the Assembly resolution) be examined in due course by a 'universal' conference.
- (v) Meantime (in order to secure the desired 'political' control) the whole of the work could be controlled by a European Committee of the Council.
- (vi) This committee might work (like the Council's 'Hungarian Committee' on the Hungarian Reconstruction Scheme) with the association of European countries not members of the Council; but it would, of course, report to the full Council.
- (vii) Similarly, with the same object, it might also be possible to propose either that a Conference of European States might meet each September, which again should report to the full Assembly, or that a special European Committee of the Assembly should be set up.

28. Such an organisation would be in accordance with precedents and existing decisions and would justify the full use of the League machinery. It would avoid the creation of a new parallel organisation. It would give the political control over economic negotiations, and would furnish the new political impetus, which M. Briand desires. At the same time, it would be practical and workable and would involve no difficulty, except in the case of proposals against which other non-European countries insisted on imposing a veto.

### *The Limits of Regionalisation within the League*

29. It remains for consideration whether this last-mentioned difficulty would really defeat any desirable object.

30. It has been shown above that the separate examination within the League of Regional or European problems and the making of European agreements embodying policies which other outside countries do not accept for themselves, but which they do not strongly object to European countries adopting *inter se*, are both practicable within the League machinery. The League machinery, however, would impede the conclusion of agreements by European countries *inter se* which they could not persuade other countries to regard as anything but injurious and hostile to themselves. But is this not

desirable on every ground? Is it not vital so to negotiate and explain European agreements to the rest of the world that the world will accept them as *not* hostile? Negotiation within the League would secure this automatically. Negotiation outside the League would make it less likely and the establishment of a European economic policy that other countries could not accept as anything but injurious to themselves would surely be a serious thing fraught with dangers of every kind.

31. I conclude, therefore, that Regionalisation so far as it is desirable should be within the framework of the League, and not, as M. Briand proposes, outside.

### *Conclusions*

From the above argument I conclude that:—

- (i) M. Briand's proposals in their present form require careful examination with a view to estimating their effect on the League of Nations and on the creation of a tendency toward continental organisations which might be fraught with danger to the British Commonwealth and to the world;
- (ii) They proceed, however, from conceptions with which His Majesty's Government have considerable sympathy;
- (iii) They are intended to secure a closer European economic co-operation which Great Britain has every interest, both political and material, to promote;
- (iv) They could easily be so transformed that they would be brought wholly within the framework of the League;
- (v) In this case their power for good would be increased, and their dangers averted;
- (vi) If this were done, M. Briand's initiative might be so used at the next Assembly and afterwards as to provide a powerful impetus for the realisation of the economic programme which the President of the Board of Trade put forward last September;
- (vii) On these grounds it is desirable for us to seek means by which M. Briand can be induced to modify his plan as above proposed.

### *Proposed British Reply to M. Briand's Note*

32. For this purpose I suggest that His Majesty's Government should reply to M. Briand's note as follows:—

We should point out that his proposals require careful consideration in consultation with the Governments of the Dominions, and that at this stage we are only able to make a tentative and preliminary reply. We should then explain on the lines of the above memorandum, but in a sympathetic way, the difficulties we feel, and the possible ways in which these difficulties could be overcome. We should then express the doubt whether any further progress can be made by the exchange of notes, and should accordingly suggest that, inasmuch as the proposals affect not only the European, but all the members of the League, there would be advantage in placing them

upon the agenda of the next Assembly, with a view to their discussion by the Assembly and their subsequent reference to a special commission for examination and report. This special commission might consist of representatives of some or all of the European members of the League.

33. If the policy outlined above were approved by my colleagues, I should propose to explain our attitude in greater detail privately to M. Briand, and to seek his agreement to the future procedure which I suggest.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The memorandum concluded with a proposed draft reply which, with minor verbal alterations, was approved by the Cabinet. For the final text of the reply, see No. 194.

## No. 194

*Mr. A. Henderson to M. de Fleuriau*

[W 7204/451/98]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 16, 1930*

His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presents his compliments to the French Ambassador, and has the honour to transmit to his Excellency herewith the reply of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom to the French Government's memorandum of the 1st May on the organisation of a system of European Federal Union.

2. Mr. Henderson would be grateful if M. de Fleuriau would forward this reply to M. Briand as soon as possible and intimate to his Excellency that it is proposed, provided that the French Government see no objection, to publish it on the morning of Friday, the 18th July.

### ENCLOSURE IN NO. 194

*Reply of His Majesty's Government to M. Briand's Memorandum for a Federated Union of Europe*

1. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have examined with profound interest the proposals for the organisation of a system of European Federal Union made by the French Government in their memorandum of the 17th May. They are of opinion that proposals so important in their purpose and in their scope require careful and prolonged consideration. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom would furthermore feel it their duty to undertake that consideration in consultation with all His Majesty's Governments in the British Commonwealth.

2. They are nevertheless desirous to comply with the request of the French Government that they should send in their observations on the proposals put forward in the memorandum not later than the 15th July. They have accordingly decided to address this note to the French Government, but they wish it to be understood that the comments and suggestions which it contains are of a preliminary and tentative kind.

3. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom understand from the memorandum that the fundamental purpose which the French Government

have in view is to divert the attention of the peoples of Europe from the hostilities of the past and from the conflicts of interest between them which are sometimes alleged to exist, and to fix their attention instead upon the more important common interests which to-day they share. The French Government hope that by their proposals they may promote closer co-operation among the nations and Governments of Europe, and thus strengthen the safeguards against another European war.

4. With this purpose His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom are in the fullest sympathy. It is an axiom of His Majesty's Government's policy that the first of British interests is peace, and measures calculated to ensure peace will therefore secure their ready and warm support. They earnestly hope that the initiative of the French Government may bring about a better understanding by the European peoples of the common interests which they share, and may thus lead both to greater mutual confidence and trust among their Governments and to a diminution of the obstacles to international trade and economic co-operation which now exist.

5. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom are also in agreement with the French Government in thinking that it is primarily in respect of economic relations that closer co-operation between the nations of Europe is urgently to be desired.

6. They further agree that, if effective economic co-operation and concerted action are to be secured, it is essential that economic questions should be considered not one by one, nor in respect of isolated interests, but as a whole, and from the wider point of view of the general interests involved. Progress on such questions depends on the extent that Governments and public opinion in the various countries can be brought to realise the vital importance of their common interests and the advantages each will derive from measures of greater international solidarity. While, as the French Government recognise, the independence and national sovereignty of each country have to be respected, as well as the special ties affecting particular groups of nations, much can be done by political authorities to promote a wider outlook on economic questions, and, in so far as political action is directed to that object, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom agree to the proposal made in the memorandum for the association of economic and political authorities.

7. In respect, however, of the methods proposed by the French Government for the realisation of their purpose, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom feel more difficulty. They are not confident that mature examination will show that the establishment of new and independent international institutions is either necessary or desirable.

8. If they have rightly understood the proposals contained in the memorandum, the French Government suggest the creation of a new European Conference and Executive Committee, and perhaps also of a new European secretariat. These bodies would in no way derive their authority from the Covenant or from Part XIII of the Treaty of Versailles; they would in no way be controlled by the rules and safeguards which those instruments

provide; they would be in no way organically connected with the League of Nations; they would only correlate their work with that of the organs of the League in so far as they decided by specific and spontaneous decisions to do so in any given case that might arise. Since the organs of the League have already begun work on virtually the whole of the programme of practical action which the memorandum puts forward, it is difficult to see how these new European institutions could operate without creating confusion, and perhaps also a rivalry, which, however little it might be intended or desired by the European Governments, could hardly fail to diminish both the efficiency and the authority of the organs of the League.

9. Apart from this very difficult problem of co-ordination, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom think it possible that an exclusive and independent European Union of the kind proposed might emphasise or create tendencies to inter-continental rivalries and hostilities which it is important in the general interest to diminish and avoid. It is in their view essential that the measures taken for closer European co-operation should not cause anxiety or resentment in any other continent. Unless this object is kept continually in view, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom are satisfied that even wider interests, both of Europe and the world, may be seriously endangered. It will be plain to the French Government that in this connexion there are special considerations of which His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, as a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations, must take account.

10. Moreover, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom are inclined to believe that the purpose which the French Government have in view can be effectively secured by so adapting the proposals put forward in the memorandum as to bring them fully within the framework of the League of Nations. They are impressed by the fact that the Warsaw Health Conference of 1922, and the reconstruction of Hungary and Austria—to name only a few of many examples that might be taken—were matters of European interest and concern, and yet were effectively dealt with by the existing machinery of the League. They are therefore convinced that it would be possible, perhaps by establishing European Committees of the Assembly, of the Council and of the Technical Organisations of the League, or perhaps in other ways, to create whatever machinery is required for promoting closer European co-operation without incurring the risks and difficulties which a system of new and independent institutions might involve.

11. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom believe, however, that these are questions which can only be adequately dealt with in open discussion among the Governments concerned, after each Government has had time to examine fully and in all their aspects the proposals which have been made. Since, for the reasons above suggested, these proposals affect intimately not only the Governments of Europe, but the Governments of all the members of the League, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom hope that the French Government may think it desirable that their memorandum should be placed upon the agenda of the next Assembly.

12. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom earnestly hope that these tentative comments and suggestions may meet with the approval of the French Government, and that by some such procedure as that above suggested, practical results of real value may be secured.

July 16, 1930.

## No. 195

### *Summary of the Replies of Governments to M. Briand's Memorandum* [W 8596/451/98]

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 22, 1930

The replies of all Governments to the Briand proposals express sympathy with the ideals which inspired them and concern at the state of Europe which they seek to remedy. Agreement is generally expressed on the necessity of respecting national independence and of erecting no federation or machinery such as might weaken the League of Nations or harmfully affect inter-continental relations. Several Governments, specially in Central Europe, stress the economic side of the proposals and urge that the solution of the economic problems would facilitate the political stabilisation of Europe.

#### (A) *Ex-Enemy Countries*

Apart from this, and generally speaking, the replies of the ex-enemy countries are to the effect that neither lasting peace nor any system of federal union can be achieved in Europe until all inequalities in the existing European system have been removed. The *Hungarian* Government state frankly that they can accept no proposals which would result in the perpetuation of the present European situation with the boundary and minority problems arising therefrom, and make it clear that they regard the agreements between the Powers of the Little *Entente* as opposed to the spirit of a federal union. They consider that Turkey should be included. The *German* Government are more cautious, but show that they consider that certain conditions prevailing to-day are untenable and render a true pacification of Europe impossible. They agree that the economic problems of Europe can only be solved when certain political conditions have been fulfilled, but they hold that these conditions are the recognition of full equality of rights and 'the peaceful adjustment of the natural necessities of life' of the various nations of Europe. Closer economic co-operation should not, however, be made dependent on the settlement of political problems, since economic understanding will contribute towards the feeling of security. The German Government therefore feel that efforts should be made to improve economic conditions, especially in tariff matters. Soviet Russia and Turkey should not be excluded. Similarly, the *Austrian* Government, while welcoming the proposals in principle, point out that the equality of rights of the various members of the European family must be recognised before peace can be assured in Europe. The *Bulgarian* Government also urge that as a preliminary all the States of

Europe must be recognised as possessing equal rights. The European Association should accord political and economic aid to the weaker countries and should devote itself, first of all, to seeing that the minority and disarmament clauses of the treaties and Covenant are carried out. Turkey should be included.

(B) *Ex-Ally Countries*

(i) *Italy*

The *Italian* Government associate themselves with this feeling by saying that the Federal Union should aim at eliminating any final distinction between victors and vanquished, at promoting the establishment of conditions of absolute equality and at protecting the rights of the smaller nations. They believe that the preliminary conditions essential for the establishment of a Federal Union are not security alone, but all those premises which are at the basis of the Covenant. Security is already safeguarded by the Covenant, the Locarno and Kellogg Pacts. If these safeguards are merely crystallised and left exposed to the competition of armaments they cannot form a real barrier against war. If, however, the pledges of disarmament contained in the Covenant are carried out, these pacts will have real force. Hence it follows that, if a Federal Union is to be established, armaments must first be reduced. They consider that Soviet Russia and Turkey should be included in the Union.

(ii) *Poland and Little Entente*

On the other hand, the Powers most closely associated with France express agreement with M. Briand's proposals as best calculated to safeguard their security. Thus the *Polish* Government state that they entirely concur in the importance of first of all guaranteeing the political security of the States of Europe, and, for this purpose, urge the advisability of taking advantage of the principles of the Geneva Protocol. The *Czechoslovak* Government welcome the proposals, which they consider constitute a logical development of the regional understandings foreseen in article 21 of the Covenant and exemplified in the *Little Entente*. The *Yugoslav* Government express entire agreement with the French proposals. The *Roumanian* Government welcome the proposals, but lay stress on the economic aspect, and suggest that an elastic political agreement would suffice to allow the organisation of close economic collaboration.

(iii) *Belgium*

The *Belgian* Government also attach importance to the economic solidarity of Europe, and point out that, while it is true that economic co-ordination cannot be achieved until security exists, the converse is equally true, since security and confidence cannot exist until Europe knows economic peace.

(iv) *Portugal*

The *Portuguese* Government draw attention to the importance of respecting the connexion which certain States may have with territories outside Europe



and also existing alliances. They consider that economic problems need not necessarily be subordinated to political problems, and suggest that the solution of the former might even facilitate the settlement of the latter.

(C) *Ex-Neutral Countries*

(i) *Spain*

The *Spanish* Government also point out that their attitude must to a certain degree be dictated by Spain's extra-European interests and the bonds which unite her to South America.

(ii) *Netherlands*

The *Netherlands* Government feel that the ground has not yet been sufficiently prepared to admit of the establishment of any political union. They feel that economic agreements should go hand in hand with political agreements; that a general reduction of tariff barriers should not wait upon political agreement, but would go far towards realising security. They, too, draw attention to difficulties arising from the fact that the territories of certain States are not confined to Europe.

(iii) *Scandinavian Countries*

The *Danish* Government also refer to the difficulties which may arise for countries having territories overseas, and they consider it essential, if any union is to be created, that it should contain all European members if the League should take part in it. The *Swedish* Government, while expressing a preference for informal collaboration rather than the establishment of an elaborate executive machinery, make it clear that they share the view that, unless His Majesty's Government join in, the Union will be futile. The *Norwegian* Government share this view, and consider that, unless union can first be found in the economic sphere, no union will ever be possible in the political sphere.

(iv) *Switzerland*

The *Swiss* Government are principally concerned to safeguard their neutrality.

(v) *Baltic Countries*

The *Finnish* Government would like to see the Union developed by the examination and harmonising of existing treaties of arbitration and conciliation, and feel that, before any concrete body is set up, the question should be fully discussed by a European committee. The *Estonian* and *Latvian* Governments attach importance to the participation of all European States, and urge that care should be taken to avoid the establishment of any machinery likely to weaken the League of Nations. The *Lithuanian* Government would also like all European States to be included, but point out that no federal union can exist so long as grave antagonisms resulting from acts of injustice exist between any of the States.

(D) *British Commonwealth of Nations*

(Only His Majesty's Governments in the United Kingdom and in the Irish Free State have addressed notes to the French Government on the subject of the Briand Memorandum.)

The *Irish Free State* Government point out that the Irish Free State has less concern with Europe than other continental States owing to the connexion with countries overseas established by her emigrants. They feel that the security necessary for closer economic union is already guaranteed by the Covenant, and consider that in the present state of Europe no attempt should be made to impose collective responsibility by the Federal Union, but rather that each State should remain free to decide to what extent it will co-operate in furthering European association.

No. 196

*From Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir R. Vansittart*  
(Received September 9)

No. 45 Telegraphic [W 9414/451/98]

GENEVA, September 9, 1930

Following from Mr. Cadogan:

On M. Briand's invitation delegates of European states and members of League met yesterday afternoon.

M. Briand read report annexed to document<sup>1</sup> circulated by French Government which summarises replies of Governments to French memorandum. He explained that he hoped that meeting might give him a declaration of general approval of the principle of his proposals.

British delegate observed that replies of Governments showed satisfactory degree of unanimity in favour of purpose of proposals but that meeting could not be expected to give definite and final decision in favour of any particular scheme. He urged that matter should be referred to Assembly and intimated that His Majesty's Government would support proposal for appointment of committee of enquiry to report next year. He would prefer that committee should be appointed by League itself.

Long discussion ensued on various possible methods of procedure. From this it emerged that there was

1. General agreement to refer matter to Assembly.
2. General desire that it should be examined by a committee which would report next year and
3. That that committee should be appointed by Assembly or by Council at the Assembly's request. In the course of their remarks various delegates showed that at this stage they could not go further than an expression of general sympathy for French proposals.

On this M. Briand said that if he could get no more definite indication of

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. For a summary of the replies, see No. 195.

general approval he could not take matter before Assembly—some other delegate might undertake the task.

Assembly knew that European Governments had been considering matter and had met in deliberation. He would be asked whether that deliberation showed unanimous desire of proceeding with the matter. Unless he could be authorized to answer in the affirmative he would prefer to make no move at all. He had prepared a resolution which he might have moved in the Assembly but seeing the attitude of the meeting it was not worth while submitting it.

M. Zaleski pressed him nevertheless to read it and M. Briand complied. Text has already been published.

Resolution could hardly have been more anodyne and British delegate intimated at once that he would be prepared to second such a resolution and it was unanimously agreed that M. Briand should put it forward in the Assembly.

### No. 197

*Resolution of the Assembly of the League of Nations, September 17, 1930.*<sup>1</sup>—(Communicated to Foreign Office, September 24)

[W 9821/451/98]

#### *Date of First Meeting*

After consultation with the General Committee of the Assembly, the Secretary-General has the honour to convoke the first meeting of the commission, established by the resolution of the Assembly of the 17th September, 1930, for Tuesday, the 23rd September, at 3.15 P.M. in the Secretariat (Room F).<sup>2</sup>

The text of the resolution and of the observation thereon made by the President of the Assembly, and accepted by the Assembly, are attached herewith.

#### *1. Resolution submitted by the French Delegation on behalf of Forty-Five Delegations to the Assembly*

‘The Assembly,

‘Having noted with keen satisfaction the resolution adopted at Geneva on the 8th September, 1930, by the representatives of the European Governments members of the League of Nations;

‘Being convinced, as they are, that close co-operation between the Governments of Europe in every field of international activity is of capital importance for the preservation of peace;

<sup>1</sup> M. Briand opened a discussion on his plan in the Assembly on September 11.

<sup>2</sup> At this meeting M. Briand was elected Chairman and Sir E. Drummond (Secretary-General of the League of Nations) Secretary of the Commission. The Commission took the title of ‘Commission of Enquiry for European Union’ and decided that its next meeting should be held at Geneva in January, 1931.

‘Sharing their unanimous opinion that such co-operation, whatever form it may assume, should be within the framework of the League of Nations, in complete accord with the League and in the spirit of the Covenant:

‘Invites the Governments of the European States members of the League of Nations, acting, with the assistance of the secretariat, as a commission of the League, to pursue the enquiry which has already been begun, and of which the French memorandum of the 17th May, 1930, and the replies thereto constitute the first elements;

‘Reminds them that, in so far as such co-operation may seem to them to be useful for the pursuit of their enquiry, it is open to them to conduct this enquiry in conjunction with non-European members and with non-member Governments;

‘And requests that the first results of this enquiry should, in so far as is possible, be embodied in the form of definite proposals in a report, which should be prepared in time to allow of its submission to the next Assembly.

‘The undersigned delegations, in submitting the above draft resolution to the Assembly, have the honour to request the president to invite the Assembly to decide upon its adoption without any previous formalities, in accordance with the provisions of article 14, paragraph 2, of the Rules of Procedure.

‘Submitted on behalf of the following delegations:

‘Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, British Empire, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hayti, Hungary, Irish Free State, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panamá, Paraguay, Peru, Persia, Poland, Portugal, Roumania, Salvador, Siam, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia.

## *2. Observation by His Excellency M. Titulesco, President of the Assembly*

I am sure that I am expressing the unanimous opinion of the Assembly in saying that those States members of the League which are not represented on the committee that has just been set up should nevertheless be entitled to send observers to the committee’s meetings in order that they may make any observations they think fit.

I take it that the Assembly approves this suggestion. (Agreed.)

## CHAPTER V

Negotiations with the French and Italian Governments with a view to facilitating a Franco-Italian Naval Agreement (from the adjournment of the London Naval Conference on April 22, 1930, to the publication of the 'Bases of Agreement' on March 11, 1931)

### INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THE documents in this chapter deal primarily with the political aspects of a series of highly technical negotiations. The discussions between naval experts have been summarized and the chapter must not be regarded as giving a complete account, on the technical side, of the naval questions examined in close detail by the parties concerned.

#### No. 198

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received May 4)*

*No. 75 Telegraphic [A 3117/1/45]*

ROME, May 3, 1930

Minister for Foreign Affairs asked me this morning to convey the following confidential message to the Prime Minister to the effect that he had done his utmost to carry out the promise given at their last conversation.<sup>1</sup> Signor Grandi on his return here had found a somewhat excited atmosphere and a campaign strongly backed by admirals and naval party for a large programme of construction of at least 50,000 tons. Signor Grandi had opposed this with modified<sup>2</sup> success. Programme of 43,000 tons as now approved was only 13,000 tons more than normal programme which would have been adopted in any case and it would only cost the Italian exchequer additional million pounds; moreover Mussolini had already approved of construction of two 10,000 ton cruisers but had agreed that there should only be one.

Signor Grandi added that speech on foreign affairs relations (*sic*) which he must deliver next week would be studiously moderate in tone, especially towards France, and non-political. He would confine himself to a clear

<sup>1</sup> At this conversation on April 14 Signor Grandi told Mr. MacDonald that he would recommend to the Italian Government (i) that, as long as the negotiations remained open, the Italian naval programme should not be greater than the French programme, (ii) that, pending the negotiations, Italy should undertake to suspend, slow down, or reduce her programme if a similar suspension, &c., were accepted by the French Government. (See also, below, No. 223.)

<sup>2</sup> The text here should probably read 'moderate'.

exposition of Italian case quoting statement made by the late Lord Balfour at Washington.

No. 199

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir R. Graham (Rome)*

*No. 51 Telegraphic [A 3214/1/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, May 7, 1930

Your telegrams Nos. 74<sup>1</sup> and 75<sup>2</sup>.

Provided Your Excellency sees no objection I should be glad if you would deliver the following message which is sent to Signor Grandi from the Prime Minister acting in his capacity as chairman of the conference.

'I am very much obliged to you for the message which you kindly conveyed to me through Sir Ronald Graham on the 3rd instant in regard to the new Italian programme of naval construction. I much appreciate the efforts which Your Excellency has been making to carry out the policy outlined in our last conversation, and I remain convinced that if the moderate elements in all countries continue to work for an agreement, it will be possible in due course to complete the London Treaty by the inclusion of tonnage figures for France and Italy. While I had anticipated that the Italian Government would in due course announce its naval construction programme for 1930, I could not of course well conceal from Your Excellency that I have been somewhat taken aback by the announcement at this moment and by the extent of this programme, having regard to the very delicate nature of the negotiations which we are hopeful shortly of continuing. Should I be right in assuming, in answer to the inevitable questions here, that the Italian Government are not proposing actually to lay down any of these keels while the negotiations for which the conference adjourned are proceeding? If you are able to give me any private assurance on this point it would both clarify and relieve my mind, for it will be pointed out that if Italy lays down further keels now France will be likely to reply by proceeding at once with new construction which might otherwise be delayed pending the negotiations. What we all want is, I think, that the negotiations should proceed in a calm and friendly atmosphere, and this is of course unlikely if building programmes are in the meantime being expedited rather than retarded.'

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. This telegram reported the Italian programme for 1930.

<sup>2</sup> No. 198.

No. 200

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir R. Graham (Rome)*

*No. 52 Telegraphic [A 3214/1/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, May 7, 1930

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

Following is for your own information only.

<sup>1</sup> No. 199.

France came to the conference with a building programme for 1930 of 42,536 tons of cruisers, destroyers and submarines, whereas Italy had announced no such programme, and the Italian delegation frequently complained that this circumstance placed them at a considerable disadvantage in the negotiations. It is therefore not unexpected and is indeed a normal proceeding that the Italian Government should announce their 1930 programme within a short lapse of time after the announcement of the corresponding French programme, but the size of this programme is undoubtedly greater than any previous Italian naval programme, being equal in tonnage to the French 1930 programme, and as such is perhaps difficult to justify at a moment when we had understood the Italian Government were anxious to assist in promoting a friendly atmosphere in which these pending negotiations can take place.

But no great harm is likely to be done provided that the Italian Government abstain from the laying down of any of these keels during the negotiations for which the conference adjourned. While we have no definite assurance on the point, we know that there are elements in the French Government which favour the suspension of the French 1930 programme (none of which has yet been laid down) pending these negotiations, but if Italy were to be the first to start construction under the 1930 programme there would of course be no further hope at all of restraining the French, and the negotiations would then take place under the worst auspices.

The Italian Government will of course be assuming a very serious responsibility if they proceed to lay down any vessels of the 1930 programme before France commences execution of her 1930 programme.

## No. 201

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir R. Graham (Rome)*

*No. 53 Telegraphic [A 3214/1/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, May 7, 1930

Following from Vansittart.

Please see our official telegrams Nos. 51 and 52.<sup>1</sup>

The reason for which we have thought it best to follow the procedure of a communication from the Chairman of the Conference rather than of a communication, official or unofficial, from His Majesty's Government, is that this message seems to follow naturally on the numerous conversations which the Prime Minister had with Signor Grandi, and the form seems less likely to arouse susceptibilities at Rome. I hope you agree on this point. We shall be glad of any suggestions which you may make in regard to the form and terms of the message, but we think it desirable that it should if possible be delivered before Signor Grandi makes the speech to which you refer in your telegram No. 75.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nos. 199 and 200.

<sup>2</sup> No. 198.

## No. 202

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received May 11)*  
*No. 82 Telegraphic [A 3289/1/45]*

ROME, May 10, 1930

Your telegrams Nos. 51 and 52.

I was able to see Signor Grandi before he left for Geneva this evening.<sup>1</sup> He had taken the Prime Minister's message in excellent part and had evidently been expecting something of the kind. He entirely appreciated that it came not from the head of the British Government but from chairman of the Conference in continuation of previous conversations.

Signor Grandi said that I must not expect him to answer offhand as he had had no opportunity of consulting Signor Mussolini who had left for a tour in Tuscany. But he showed me in all confidence draft of his proposed answer to the Prime Minister asking me to consider it as non-existent until it had received Signor Mussolini's *imprimatur*. It was to the effect that so long as negotiations for which the Conference adjourned were proceeding, Italy would be perfectly ready to agree with France that, in so far as 1930 programme was concerned, there should be a naval holiday, either complete with no constructions at all, or partial with equivalent constructions to be agreed upon. Signor Grandi considered that if such agreement could be reached it ought to be rendered public.

Signor Grandi hoped to be able to show this letter to Signor Mussolini on his way to Geneva and I suggested that he might forward it, if and when approved, to the Prime Minister through the medium of our courier.

<sup>1</sup> For a fuller report of this conversation and for the text of Signor Grandi's reply to Mr. MacDonald see No. 208.

## No. 203

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received May 11)*  
*No. 83 Telegraphic [A 3290/1/45]*

ROME, May 10, 1930

Following is continuation of my immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

Signor Grandi added that he hoped that I had liked his speech and that it would meet with approval in England. I could with all sincerity make the obvious reply. He declared that it was ambition of his life to come to an agreement with France and that he by no means despaired of doing so although the road might be long and difficult. He expressed special gratification at the cordial demonstration which his reference to British Prime Minister had evoked in Italian Chamber.

<sup>1</sup> No. 202.



No. 204

*Notes of a conversation between Mr. A. Henderson and M. Briand in Paris on May 9 (Received May 14)*<sup>1</sup>

[C 3739/29/22]

PARIS, May 10, 1930

M. Briand said that he had, of course, been thinking over the position of France and Italy as it had emerged from the Naval Conference, and how best to continue the negotiations. He would be glad to know if Mr. Henderson had any ideas in mind.

Mr. Henderson replied that during the Naval Conference he had gained the impression that, although personal relations were always cordial, there was something radically amiss with Franco-Italian relations. He wondered whether, if the general relations of the two countries could be improved, it might not lead to a quicker and happier solution of the naval problem. At the same time the matter should not be allowed to drag on because, although there was no longer any question of resuming the work of the Preparatory Commission for Disarmament in advance of the next Assembly, it was very desirable that some assurance should be given to the Assembly as to the good intentions of the Powers and the prospects of success. Otherwise the idea would gain ground that the Great Powers were losing interest.

M. Briand said that, as Mr. Henderson knew, negotiations had been proceeding between the two countries for some time on a number of questions, that he had done all he could to promote a satisfactory solution, but the outlook was not very encouraging. He quite agreed with Mr. Henderson as to the necessity for reassuring the Assembly.

M. Briand said that before leaving London he had agreed with M. Grandi to resume their conversations at Geneva, and that he would do so at once on arrival. He would be grateful if Mr. Henderson were willing to join in these conversations if at any moment it appeared that he could help by doing so.

Mr. Henderson replied that he, too, would speak to M. Grandi soon after arrival in Geneva, and that he would thereafter at any time be pleased to join in the conversations whenever M. Briand wished.

<sup>1</sup> These notes were communicated by His Majesty's Embassy in Paris.

No. 205

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir R. Graham (Rome)*

No. 604 [A 3545/1/45]

Sir,

FOREIGN OFFICE, May 27, 1930

I invited Signor Grandi to lunch with me at the Hôtel Beau Rivage on the 12th instant. He came accompanied by Signor Rosso. Mr. Selby and Mr. Cadogan were also present at the luncheon.

2. After luncheon I told Signor Grandi that I had wished on my arrival

in Geneva to take the earliest opportunity of informing him of what had transpired between myself and M. Briand in Paris. As he knew, I had stayed in Paris for a day on my way to Geneva and M. Briand had invited me to lunch with him at the Quai d'Orsay, and in conversation afterwards had himself raised the question of the position left by the London Conference in relation to the position as between France and Italy. M. Briand had enquired whether I had considered the position and whether I had any suggestions to make as regards the conduct of the conversations indicated on the termination of the London Conference.

3. I had replied to M. Briand that after a careful consideration of the whole position as the result of my experience of the London Conference, it seemed to me that the naval position as between France and Italy was in large measure affected by certain political issues which remained outstanding between the two countries, and that further satisfactory progress in the direction of the solution of the naval problem might, to a large extent, depend on a solution being found for the political issues. I had explained to M. Briand that if he considered that any useful purpose would be served by my assistance or participation in the conversations which he seemed to be contemplating engaging in with Signor Grandi, I should be only too pleased to offer my services at the proper time. M. Briand had thanked me for this indication of my attitude and had said that he felt sure my participation would be of the greatest utility and that so far as he was concerned he would be glad to avail himself of the help which I had offered. I told Signor Grandi that I wished him to know this as I desired to acquaint him of the offer I had made to M. Briand so that he, on his side, might avail himself of it should he desire to do so.

4. Signor Grandi thanked me most warmly both for telling him of the purport of my conversation with M. Briand and for the good offices which I was prepared to place at the disposal of both parties. So far as he was concerned he would be only too glad to avail himself of the assistance I was willing to afford.

5. Signor Grandi went on to refer to the communication which had been made to him through His Majesty's Ambassador in Rome by the Prime Minister in regard to the programme of naval construction recently announced by the Italian Government. He said that he had sent a reply to the Prime Minister through His Majesty's Ambassador in Rome. The attitude of the Italian Government in regard to this programme was that they were certainly prepared to postpone the laying down of the various units provided for in the degree and the measure [in] which the French might be disposed to postpone the carrying out of their own naval programme. That was the position of the Italian Government which Signor Grandi ventured to suggest was a reasonable and fair position to take up.

6. I told Signor Grandi that I would re-emphasise to him what I had already said to M. Briand in Paris: namely, that the naval issues were involved with certain political differences which remained outstanding between France and Italy and that it seemed to me, for a really satisfactory

solution to be achieved which would enable a further meeting of the Preparatory Commission on Disarmament to take place with some prospect of success, it was important to treat the question of the relations between France and Italy on broad lines with a view to eliminating an obstacle which had hitherto stood in the way of a solution of the problem of disarmament.

7. Signor Grandi observed that he was in agreement with my view, although he would suggest that the political differences outstanding between France and Italy were not really of so complicated a nature as to exclude all hope of a solution being found. He said that misfortune had certainly attended the earlier discussion of the questions which he attributed in large measure to the fact that the negotiations had been conducted either through the Italian Embassy in Paris or the French Embassy in Rome, and that misunderstandings had certainly arisen as a result, which had impeded progress. It was, however, now his intention to give his personal attention to the question and take the matter in hand himself. He said that he had gone to London armed with full information in regard to the political issues outstanding with France with a view to their discussion with M. Briand, but that with the exception of a few minutes' conversation with M. Briand and a rather inconclusive discussion with M. Piétri, he had not made any great progress. It was now definitely his intention to deal with these political issues with M. Briand and he felt that my services as an intermediary would be of the greatest possible assistance.

8. As regards the Italian naval programme, Signor Grandi observed that it would really be a mistake to regard that programme as in the nature of bluff. The Italian programmes in the past years had been duly carried out and the financial position of Italy would certainly permit her to give effect to the new programme. He said that he had been somewhat discouraged by the reception of the announcement of the programme in France. Two courses had been open to the Italian Government: (1) to lay down the ships provided for in the programme without giving particular publicity to the intentions of the Italian Government, or (2) to announce the programme boldly. He had himself elected for the latter procedure as he thought that was the best way of averting criticism. He was not sure, having regard to the reception of the programme in France, that he had not made a mistake.

9. I told Signor Grandi that I presumed that the purpose of the luncheon which M. Briand had asked us both to attend on the following day was to lay down the procedure as to how the forthcoming Franco-Italian conversations could best be conducted, and I expressed the opinion that it would be desirable to fix forthwith the time and place when these conversations should begin.

10. Signor Grandi seemed sceptical as to any too formal announcement as regards the procedure, as he seemed to be of the opinion that it would be better to discuss the problem as informally as possible with a view to ascertaining whether there was any basis of agreement which would enable official conversations to go forward with hopeful prospects.

11. I thanked Signor Grandi for this expression of his views and said that we must now await the result of the joint conversation which we were due to have with M. Briand on the following day.

I am, &c.

ARTHUR HENDERSON

No. 206

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir R. Vansittart (Received May 17)*

No. 22 [C 3808/29/22]

The British delegate to the League of Nations presents his compliments, and has the honour to transmit copy of a record of conversation with M. Briand on the 13th instant.

GENEVA, May 14, 1930.

ENCLOSURE IN No. 206

*Record of Conversation between Mr. A. Henderson and M. Briand*

I lunched with M. Briand to-day, at his invitation, to meet Signor Grandi. Mr. Selby accompanied me and Signor Rosso, M. Léger and M. Massigli were also present.

At the close of the luncheon M. Briand remarked, in his usual jocular fashion, that the time had possibly come to reopen the London Conference, and, as the issue was clear, he would be glad if Signor Grandi could give him any indication as to the lines on which he considered the conversations could best be conducted.

Signor Grandi replied that he was perfectly ready to engage in any conversations which M. Briand might desire and was entirely at his disposal as to the procedure to be followed.

M. Briand said that he took note of the attitude of Signor Grandi and proceeded to emphasise the importance of an agreement between France and Italy. He referred to the possibility of, simultaneously or thereabouts with the Assembly, fixing a place where the crown could be placed on the work about to be undertaken. He said that he had always impressed on Signor Grandi that he regarded the peace of Europe as depending on the establishment of a good understanding between Germany, Italy, France and Great Britain and that a great step in advance in the direction of consolidating the position would be taken if the present conversations could be conducted to a satisfactory conclusion. He added that once the difficulties outstanding between them were out of the way, the naval problem necessarily settled itself.

I said that it seemed to me that what had to be decided was the time and method of dealing with the outstanding questions and the order in which those questions should be taken.

Signor Grandi had impressed upon M. Briand that the problem to be dealt with was psychological rather than a real one. What the Italian Government were aiming at was that they should be able to prove to their own people that France, in the same way as Great Britain had done in the matter of Jubaland, had given effect to her treaty undertakings in the matter of the rectification of the frontiers in Northern Africa.

In response to an enquiry of mine, Signor Rosso said that, with the regulation of the Tunis and Tripolitan questions, the two parties could at once proceed to the signature of the Treaty of Arbitration and Friendship which was already agreed between the two Governments in draft.

I enquired of Signor Rosso the extent to which he considered the settlement of the political questions to which he had referred would facilitate a regulation of the naval question outstanding between the two countries, in which we were much interested, having regard to the meeting of the Preparatory Commission in November next.

Signor Rosso said, for my very confidential information, that there was no question but that the settlement of the political problems between France and Italy would undoubtedly facilitate a settlement of the naval problem. Though it might not be possible for Italy to make any concession on the principle of parity, the Italian Government would be ready to put that question aside. He said that he had been discussing, and would further discuss, with the naval authorities in Rome the possibility of the application of some form of yardstick of the requirements of France and Italy. In his conception it should be possible to apply this yardstick in such a way as not to affect the problem of numbers. Taking, for instance, the question of submarines, he suggested, as an example, that it might be possible to lay down that Italy should have, say, twenty submarines of a tonnage of 20,000 tons, against a similar number of French submarines with a higher total tonnage. The application of such a yardstick would have the effect of conceding to the French the slight superiority of total tonnage of the various categories of vessels at which they are aiming.

I thanked Signor Rosso for his communication, and said that I would not fail to inform the Secretary of State of its purport.

W. SELBY

GENEVA, *May 15, 1930*

## No. 208

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received May 20)*

*No. 349 [A 3547/1/45]*

Sir,

ROME, *May 16, 1930*

When your telegrams Nos. 51 and 52, regarding the new Italian programme of naval construction, arrived in Rome I was unfortunately absent in Milan in connexion with various celebrations in that town and at Monza. The text of the Prime Minister's message to Signor Grandi only reached me on the morning of the 9th, that is to say, of the day on which his Excellency

was to deliver his speech on foreign affairs in the Chamber. Although I felt some misgiving as to the effect on Signor Grandi's susceptibilities of the surprise expressed in this message over the announcement of the Italian programme at this moment and its extent, I entirely shared your view that his Excellency ought to receive it before he delivered his speech in case he had any intention of announcing an immediate fulfilment of the Italian programme. This was, of course, unlikely, but was yet possible in view of the irritation towards France felt here. The message was, therefore, delivered to Signor Grandi as it stood by Mr. Osborne on the morning of the 9th May.

2. When I reached Rome on the morning of the 10th May I found my staff naturally somewhat perturbed over an officially inspired announcement which had appeared on the front page of the 'Tribuna' on the afternoon of the previous day. This announcement, copy of which is enclosed in translation,<sup>1</sup> certainly looked at first sight as in the nature of a rejoinder to Mr. MacDonald's message. I felt certain that Signor Grandi would never have lent himself to such a form of reply, but I feared that possibly one of his staff might have shown the message to Signor Forges Davanzati, the violent editor of the 'Tribuna,' who is in such close touch with the Ministry.

3. When, however, I saw Signor Grandi at midday on the 10th May any such apprehension was at once dispelled. His Excellency told me that he had received the message shortly before the delivery of his speech, but that, after glancing at it and seeing that it in no way affected anything he intended to say, he had put it in his pocket and had not dealt with it until the evening. It seems that the 'Tribuna' announcement referred to statements in the French press. His Excellency had taken the message in excellent part and had entirely appreciated that it came from Mr. MacDonald, not as Prime Minister, but as chairman of the Naval Conference, and was a continuation of previous conversations. His Excellency said that he thought the surprise expressed in the message was scarcely justified, but he realised how embarrassing it would be for the British Government if Italy and France embarked on an immediate fulfilment of their 1930 programmes. He then showed me a draft of his proposed reply to the Prime Minister, as reported in my telegram No. 82<sup>2</sup> of the 10th May. Signor Mussolini was absent on a tour in Tuscany, but he, Signor Grandi, hoped to meet him in the course of his own journey to Geneva and would submit the draft reply for his approval.

4. On the 12th May I received an urgent letter from Signor Grandi enclosing his answer to the Prime Minister, which had evidently received the approval of Signor Mussolini. It was almost in the exact terms of the draft he had shown me. I have the honour to transmit a translation of this letter herewith. An advance translation which accompanied Signor Grandi's letter has already reached you.<sup>3</sup>

I have, &c.

R. GRAHAM

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

<sup>2</sup> No. 202.

<sup>3</sup> This advance copy was received on May 14. Mr. MacDonald sent a message of thanks to Signor Grandi through Mr. Henderson (at Geneva).

*Signor Grandi to Sir R. Graham*

*Translation*

My dear Ambassador,

ROME, May 11, 1930

I have the honour to transmit to your Excellency the following message in answer to the one which Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, in his capacity of chairman of the London Naval Conference, was good enough to send me through your Embassy (dated the 9th May, 1930), and would be grateful if you will kindly forward it to the Prime Minister:—

‘Dear Prime Minister,

‘I have much pleasure in answering the letter which, in your capacity of chairman of the London Naval Conference, you have sent me through the British Embassy in Rome, and I am thus happy, pending the resumption of the negotiations, to be able to continue the conversations which I had with you during the past months.

‘I very much desire that these negotiations should proceed in as calm and friendly an atmosphere as possible, and, like you, I am convinced that we all should continue to work to reach an agreement so as to complete the treaty recently signed.

‘With regard to what I had occasion to point out to you in the last conversation to which you refer, the building programme for the current year recently approved by the Italian Government merely follows the French programme both in order of time and in regard to the amount of tonnage, thus maintaining the character of parity which, in the aggregate, has been the case during the past seven years. In the table annexed you will find the documentary proof thereof. The figures given both for Italy and for France are taken from the parliamentary report on the French naval budget for 1930, annexed to the minutes of the sitting of the Chamber of Deputies of the 31st July, 1929, and submitted by the then Député Dumesnil.

‘I fully realise your concern and the desirability, not only of avoiding anything which might hinder or delay an agreement, but also of promoting anything which might further it. I confirm, therefore, all that I said to you in our last conversation, that is to say, I would be willing to propose to my Government that, while the negotiations for which the conference was adjourned are proceeding, Italy should abstain from laying down the 1930 programme if France were willing to do likewise with regard to her programme voted for the current year.

‘Given the strengths of the two fleets, and particularly their composition, it is evident that such a measure would have a proportionately greater bearing on the Italian fleet than on the French fleet. Nevertheless, for the reasons given above, and as I have just said, I could propose and recommend to my Government to follow *pari passu* the French Government in the postponement of the laying down of the programme authorised for the current year.

'I trust you will appreciate at its true value both the motives which prompt my reply and the reply itself, and I am glad of the opportunity thus offered to assure you, my dear Prime Minister, of my highest consideration.'

I take, &c.

GRANDI

ENCLOSURE 2 IN No. 208

*Tonnage laid down yearly by France and by Italy according to the 'Dumesnil' Report, completed with figures, and the Second 'Tranche' of the French 1929 Programme, and of the Construction authorised for 1930.*

<i>Year</i>	<i>France</i>	<i>Italy</i>
1924 . . . . .	21,370	19,105
1925 . . . . .	32,690	20,815
1926 . . . . .	12,700	2,950
1927 . . . . .	38,325	50,300
1928 . . . . .	32,845	30,500
1929 . . . . .	21,160	39,200
'II <sup>e</sup> Tranche' . . . . .	21,265	
1930 'Authorised' . . . . .	43,200	43,000
Totals . . . . .	223,555	205,870

No. 209

*Mr. A. Henderson to Lord Tyrrell (Paris)*

*No. 1087 [A 3546/1/45]*

My Lord,

FOREIGN OFFICE, May 23, 1930

I have to inform your Lordship that on the 15th May I spoke to M. Briand at Geneva on the subject of naval programmes and told him that I had received a message from the Prime Minister stating that the proponents of naval expansion in this country were beginning to make trouble. I therefore asked M. Briand whether he thought that the French and Italian Governments might possibly be brought to agree on the postponement of their respective programmes.

2. M. Briand replied that he, for his part, was disposed to favour a postponement and would communicate to this effect with the Minister of Marine and the Président du Conseil.

3. I asked M. Briand whether his Government would resent an official representation on the subject through the diplomatic channel and he answered that he thought it best to leave the matter as it was. He would take it up personally in Paris.

4. I subsequently spoke to Signor Grandi and ascertained from him that he would be prepared to agree to the postponement of the laying down, not only of the large cruiser, but of other vessels included in the Italian programme.

I am, &c.

ARTHUR HENDERSON



*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received May 28)*

*No. 96 Telegraphic [A 3814/1/45]*

ROME, May 28, 1930

Signor Grandi who has made an excellent recovery from his operation asked to see me last night and said that he urgently required my private advice and help. Signor Mussolini's recent speeches had greatly embarrassed him. Debate on foreign affairs in the Senate which was now the more important of the two Chambers politically would begin on Friday<sup>1</sup> and he would have to make second speech. The other leading speakers should be Scialoja and Schanzer. Former had declined to speak at all saying that he found it impossible to reconcile policies of Signor Mussolini and Signor Grandi. Schanzer would probably be friendly enough but would certainly dilate on his own achievements at Washington in 1922 which would not help. Signor Grandi had read Signor Mussolini's Leghorn speech<sup>2</sup> when at Geneva where it had placed him in a very difficult situation. Florence speech<sup>3</sup> with its assertive tone and its allusion to building of new naval programme ton by ton and Milan speech which had done little more than confirm the other two he had read on his sick bed here. They had made him wonder whether the whole foreign policy of Italy as he had expounded it was not to be reversed. He had therefore looked forward to his first interview with Signor Mussolini with considerable misgiving and some expectation of himself leaving office. But he had now seen His Excellency and had been received with all the old kindness and cordiality. Signor Grandi had asked what line he was now to take in his forthcoming speech in the Senate. Signor Mussolini had replied that he was of course to adopt exactly the same line as in the Chamber. Signor Grandi had enquired how he could reconcile this line with Signor Mussolini's recent speeches to which latter had somewhat to his astonishment retorted 'What on earth have they got to do with it? What does it matter what I say to my crowds? Why do you think I made you Foreign Minister except to be able to talk here exactly as I please!' Signor Mussolini was perfectly sincere and this was the strange

<sup>1</sup> May 30.

<sup>2</sup> In this speech on May 11 Signor Mussolini said that 'in sight of your sea, or rather of our sea, after I have seen your shipyards where the workers are untiring in building future units of war, I wish to say to you and not only to you but to the whole Italian people, and also to the peoples beyond our frontiers, that we are not anxious to embark on any rash adventures, but if anyone makes an attempt on our independence or on our future, he little knows to what a fever-heat I will raise the Italian nation'.

<sup>3</sup> In this speech on May 17 Signor Mussolini said that 'nothing could be more injurious to the pride of the Italians than a suspicion that their recent naval programme would not be realized'. This programme would be realized 'ton by ton', and, 'sooner than remain prisoners in the sea which once belonged to Rome', Italians would be 'capable of exceptional sacrifice'. Signor Mussolini added: 'Words are very beautiful, but rifles, machine-guns, ships and aeroplanes are still more beautiful. A powerfully-armed Fascist Italy would offer two simple alternatives: either a precious friendship or an adamant hostility.'

chief with whom he had to deal. But the air was now clear and Signor Grandi intended in the Senate to strike and to dwell on exactly the same note as in the Chamber. His task would be more difficult than that of St. Thomas Aquinas (who had to reconcile the devil and holy water) but he would do his best.

Now came the point where he wanted my advice and help. It had struck him that it would assist both himself and his cause very greatly if given a suitable atmosphere in the Senate he could quote his reply of May 11 to Prime Minister's message of May 9.<sup>1</sup> Its terms would substantiate moderation and conciliatory nature of Italian policy and would moreover commit Signor Mussolini whose approval of letter would be emphasized, to such a policy. I said that before replying I should like to know whether he was also ready to quote Prime Minister's message? Signor Grandi replied that he would like to do so but there was one difficulty. Actual text of this message had only been seen by his personal staff and Admiral Sirianni and one passage in it, that beginning 'I could not of course' down to 'short of eliminating'<sup>2</sup> had aroused their resentment as it certainly would have that of Signor Mussolini and of his other colleagues. He had not therefore shown them message but had made an excuse only to quote to them enquiry contained in latter half of it. But he quite realized that if he quoted his own reply and only part of Prime Minister's message Mr. MacDonald might have to produce in Parliament original message and in any case such correspondence was always published sooner or later. Did I think Mr. MacDonald could agree to modify sentence in question? He would have liked to omit it altogether but then it would not be clear that enquiry that came later referred to 1930 programme. I said I could of course only submit the matter to the Prime Minister. The success of his (? proposals)<sup>3</sup> owing to Signor Grandi's prompt and generous response, had been handsomely achieved and it was possible that he might consent to modification. What modification did Signor Grandi suggest? He replied that he wished to omit any expression of surprise at what was after all a perfectly natural programme announced at the natural moment. At his request I then drafted the following tentative sentence in substitution: 'I could not of course well conceal from Your Excellency that such an announcement delivered at this moment might be likely to react unfavourably upon the very delicate negotiations which we are hopeful shortly of continuing.' Signor Grandi agreed saying that he would prefer if possible to omit the word 'unfavourably'. He would also like that if possible the reference to 'moderate elements of France'<sup>4</sup> which implied that there were also violent elements should be omitted and that sentence should run 'and I remain convinced that if all countries continue to work'.

<sup>1</sup> Nos. 208 and 199.

<sup>2</sup> These words should read 'shortly of continuing'.

<sup>3</sup> The text here is uncertain.

<sup>4</sup> These words should read 'in all countries'.

No. 211

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir R. Graham (Rome)*

*No. 63 Telegraphic [A 3814/1/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *May 29, 1930*

Following from Vansittart:—

Begins:

Latter part of your telegram was undecypherable and Prime Minister was therefore obliged—in view of urgency of reply by Friday—to consider matter without full enlightenment. Following is his comment:

‘Grandi should be urged to treat the actual communications as private and that if he wants to use the substance of this<sup>1</sup> reply he should reiterate it independently of the communication he made to me.’

Will you please act accordingly.

<sup>1</sup> This word was telegraphed in error. The draft reads ‘his’.

No. 212

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir R. Graham (Rome)*

*No. 64 Telegraphic [A 3814/1/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *May 30, 1930*

Following from Sir R. Vansittart.

Repetition of undecypherable portion of your telegram No. 96<sup>1</sup> has now been read, but you will already have received a reply communicated to you in my telegram No. 63<sup>2</sup> of May 29. I would only add for your information that the Prime Minister could hardly in any case have altered an existing text.

<sup>1</sup> No. 210.

<sup>2</sup> No. 211.

No. 213

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received May 31)*

*No. 98 Telegraphic [A 3876/1/45]*

ROME, *May 31, 1930*

Your telegrams Nos. 63 and 64.

Signor Grandi accepted the Prime Minister's decision with a good grace but was obviously disappointed. He said that he had intended to use substance of his reply as leading feature of his speech but to reiterate it independently would appear in the light of a contradiction to Signor Mussolini's recent 'ton by ton' speech and was impossible. He would therefore not allude to the matter at all. He agreed that in the circumstances the question of

modifying text of original message had lost interest except from the point of view of future publication.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On June 20 Sir R. Graham wrote to Sir R. Vansittart that Signor Grandi had again raised the question of altering the text of Mr. MacDonald's message. Signor Grandi wished to submit to Signor Mussolini all the papers concerned with the naval question and to obtain a signed Cabinet minute approving his (Signor Grandi's) policy. He still considered that Signor Mussolini might take offence at the words 'I have been somewhat taken aback by . . . shortly of continuing'. In view of Signor Grandi's renewed request Mr. MacDonald agreed on June 26 that the document containing the message should be returned, and that a new text should be sent to Signor Grandi substituting for the words in question 'such an announcement coming at this moment might be likely to react unfavourably upon the very delicate negotiations which we are hopeful shortly of continuing'.

## No. 214

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received June 2)*

No. 384 [C 4342/141/92]

Sir,

ROME, May 30, 1930

With reference to my despatch No. 383<sup>1</sup> of to-day's date, Signor Grandi, in my conversation with him on the 27th May, alluded with considerable bitterness to the reports in the French press regarding an alleged Italian landing in Albania. Signor Grandi said that such reports were, on the face of them, ridiculous, but it was their purpose that he resented. He had had a decidedly satisfactory conversation with M. Marinkovitch<sup>2</sup> at Geneva. It had been cordial throughout, and both sides had tacitly agreed to make no allusion to Albania, which was a question that would settle itself. In fact, this conversation had marked a distinct step towards each other on the part of Italy and Yugoslavia. What was the immediate French reply? The invention and circulation of these ridiculous reports calculated to arouse the utmost resentment in Yugoslavia. It was all very well for M. Briand to talk of the good advice which he gave at Belgrade, but the above French action was their real response to any *rapprochement* between Belgrade and Rome, and he, Signor Grandi, feared that it would always be like this.

2. His Excellency added that much resentment had been caused here by certain speeches delivered at Lyons by M. Herriot, who had attacked Signor Mussolini in a disgraceful and personal manner.

I have, &c.

R. GRAHAM

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. This despatch summarized Italian press comments on the reports of the alleged landing in Albania.

<sup>2</sup> Foreign Minister of Yugoslavia.

## No. 215

*Lord Tyrrell (Paris) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received June 2)*

No. 589 [C 4303/29/22]

Sir,

PARIS, May 31, 1930

I have the honour to transmit to you herein copies of an article which appeared in the 'Dépêche de Toulouse' on the 30th May respecting Italian

policy.<sup>1</sup> It is generally believed that the personage whose views are recorded in this article is M. Camille Barrère, French Ambassador at Rome for some twenty-two years.

2. I gather from enquiry on the 28th May at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs that no further step had yet been taken towards the Franco-Italian negotiations, of which the possibility was discussed at Geneva (see enclosures to your despatch No. 1116<sup>1</sup> of the 26th May). It is fully admitted here that internal considerations may be the real cause of M. Mussolini's Florence and Leghorn speeches. But it would be very difficult for the French Government to negotiate under menace; and there is in Paris anxiety respecting the situation which is arising. I should like to add that M. Blum, the leader of the Socialist party, who called upon me this morning, observed to me that M. Mussolini's recent speeches had made an impression upon French public opinion to this extent that, whereas, a few weeks ago, M. Blum would have dismissed the possibility of any serious movement in favour of Yugoslavia in the event of a conflict between the latter and Italy, he would not now deny such a possibility. He added at the same time his belief that such a movement would be checked. I mentioned to him a report which had reached me that M. Mussolini might show some reluctance to divert the large credits which had been affected to the service of the construction of roads towards the building of warships. In this connexion he called my attention to the fact that these roads had a strategical character, and were mainly directed towards facilitating access to Hungary, and that an intensive road construction was being undertaken in Albania. M. Blum seemed sure of his facts and invited me to have them checked.

3. Speaking yesterday at a luncheon in Paris, at which M. Bottai, a member of the Italian Government was present, M. Paul Reynaud, the Minister for Finance, referred to France as 'calm but strong, calm because strong'. He mentioned, also, the French African Dominions 'flesh of our flesh'.

I have, &c.

TYRRELL

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

## No. 216

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir R. Graham (Rome)*

*No. 650 [C 4083/29/22]*

Sir,

FOREIGN OFFICE, *June 13, 1930*

With reference to your despatch No. 357<sup>1</sup> of the 23rd May, I transmit to you herewith a copy of a despatch to His Majesty's Ambassador at Paris containing an account of a conversation between Sir Robert Vansittart and the French Ambassador on the subject of Franco-Italian relations.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. This despatch reported Italian press comments and statements on the position with regard to the Franco-Italian conversations.

2. I should be glad if your Excellency will likewise take an early opportunity to sound Signor Grandi as to the progress of the promised Franco-Italian conversations.

3. Copy of Lord Tyrrell's private letter referred to in my despatch to Paris is enclosed herein.<sup>1</sup>

I am, &c.

ARTHUR HENDERSON

ENCLOSURE IN No. 216

*Mr. A. Henderson to Lord Tyrrell (Paris)*

No. 1237

My Lord,

FOREIGN OFFICE, *June 13, 1930*

In the course of a conversation with the Permanent Under-Secretary of State on the 24th May the French Ambassador stated that his Government were not very happy about the renewal of the Franco-Italian conversations. Signor Mussolini's speeches had, of course, produced a very bad effect, but he hoped that this effect would in time be dissipated. M. de Fleuriau had, however, heard from Rome that there appeared to be some difference of opinion between Signor Mussolini and Signor Grandi.

2. His Excellency went on to say that a further difficulty was the Italian Prime Minister's increasing tendency to be inaccessible in matters relating to foreign affairs. Signor Mussolini had of late become more and more immersed in internal politics, and when one of the foreign Ambassadors endeavoured to see him on some external matter, he usually referred him simply to Signor Grandi. Contact was therefore difficult and rare, and occasions could not often be found for bringing any persuasion or influence to bear upon him.

3. Your Lordship's private letter of the 4th instant has shown me what M. Briand's personal attitude is towards the situation created by Signor Mussolini's recent speeches, but I should be glad of more explicit information regarding the present state of the actual conversations between the two Governments. I request, therefore, that you will take an early opportunity of sounding M. Briand as to what progress, if any, is being made both in regard to the naval problem and also in regard to the various political questions.

4. A copy of this despatch has been forwarded to His Majesty's Ambassador at Rome, to whom the request contained in the preceding paragraph has been repeated.

I am, &c.

ARTHUR HENDERSON

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. In this letter Lord Tyrrell reported that M. Briand had told him that, in spite of Signor Mussolini's speeches, he had remained in contact with Signor Grandi. M. Briand considered Signor Mussolini 'rather a madman who had to be humoured'; the French Government had been careful 'to refrain from furnishing him with any ammunition for further outbursts'.

*Mr. A. Henderson to Lord Tyrrell (Paris)**No. 1242 [C 4679/29/22]*

My Lord,

FOREIGN OFFICE, *June 16, 1930*

The French Ambassador left with Sir Robert Vansittart on the 13th June the enclosed memorandum on the subject of Franco-Italian relations. M. de Fleuriau stated that he did not, of course, ask for any action on our part, but that, in view of the recent conversations at Geneva, he felt that I should know of this, the gravest of the recent incidents.

2. So far all mention of the incident had been kept out of the press, but, should it become known, it would render it extremely difficult to take up again the Franco-Italian negotiations, especially after Signor Mussolini's speeches, which had no doubt given rise to the incident.

3. M. de Fleuriau made it clear that the French Government did not contemplate resuming negotiations for the present, and Sir Robert Vansittart then stated that he trusted that the French Government would not allow such an exhibition of childishness to become magnified into a real obstacle, since time was short and negotiations should soon be opened if anything was to be accomplished before November.

4. When asked whether negotiations were to be interrupted or whether they had never been begun, M. de Fleuriau turned the conversation and refused to revert to this subject.

I am, &amp;c.

ARTHUR HENDERSON

ENCLOSURE IN NO. 217

*Memorandum respecting Franco-Italian Relations*

Des incidents fâcheux, auxquels la presse italienne n'a fait aucune allusion, se sont produits samedi dernier à Bari. Un pavillon français et un pavillon yougoslave ont été brûlés ce jour-là sur la Place de la Préfecture, à l'issue d'une réunion d'étudiants des Pouilles et de la Basilicate, à laquelle assistaient les autorités locales. Deux autres pavillons auraient été lacérés et les étudiants s'en seraient partagé les lambeaux, qu'ils auraient portés à leurs boutonnières pendant les journées de samedi et de dimanche.

Le samedi 7 juin, également, en sortant de leur réunion, les étudiants se sont rendus par deux fois devant l'agence consulaire de France, où ils ont poussé des cris de 'À bas la France!' en lançant dans la direction de l'écusson français des flacons d'encre, qui n'ont d'ailleurs pas atteint leur but. À un moment donné, les deux barrages de police, qui n'opposaient aux manifestants qu'une résistance assez molle, ont été forcés et les étudiants ont cherché à décrocher l'écusson consulaire. Les carabiniers sont alors intervenus plus énergiquement pour les en empêcher. Immédiatement derrière les manifestants, se trouvait la fanfare des mousques du navire-école 'Éridan,' qui jouait des airs patriotiques.

L'Ambassadeur de France près le Quirinal a adressé au Ministère des Affaires étrangères italien une note attirant son attention sur les faits dont il s'agit et demandant qu'une enquête fût ouverte pour établir les responsabilités et rechercher notamment dans quelles conditions la musique d'un navire-école avait été autorisée à accompagner des manifestations antifrançaises.

Il a été répondu à l'Ambassadeur de France que les faits signalés étaient regrettables et que d'ores et déjà un inspecteur général avait été chargé d'ouvrir une enquête.

No. 218

*Lord Tyrrell (Paris) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received June 18)*

*No. 671 [C 4820/29/22]*

Sir,

PARIS, June 17, 1930

Immediately upon the receipt of your despatch No. 1237<sup>1</sup> of the 13th June I asked M. Briand to receive me. This he did this morning upon his return to Paris.

2. I asked his Excellency how he was getting on in his conversations with Italy, both with regard to the naval question and to the political questions that are still in suspense between the two countries, as you were very anxious to know what progress was being made in both directions. I also pointed out to his Excellency the importance of the time factor in the situation owing to the general desire that the ground should be well prepared for the meeting of the Preparatory Commission for Disarmament in Geneva in the autumn.

3. M. Briand replied immediately by saying that he had caused to be communicated to you an account of the incidents which had occurred in connexion with the attack made upon the French at Bari. Not only had a French flag been torn down, but the crowd had behaved in a very improper if not indecent manner at the buildings of the consulate. 'How can I,' M. Briand said, 'either talk or negotiate in an atmosphere created by such incidents? I am a man of peace and goodwill, but I confess quite frankly that I am puzzled by the attitude of the head of the Italian Government. His Foreign Minister is in every way conciliatory, and I much appreciate the last speech he delivered in the Senate at Rome. But I find it difficult to reconcile it with the speeches of his chief, which are followed by such incidents as occurred at Bari, and by the speeches delivered on the occasion of the christening of several war vessels the other day by Italian Royalty, when emphatic declarations were made that Italy had no intention of reducing her armaments by a single ton.'

4. M. Briand added, however, that the Italian Government had promised an enquiry, which no doubt would be followed by an apology if the facts were proved to be true, and he would then resume his conversations as soon as the Italian attitude made it possible to do so without being exposed to the legitimate criticism of public opinion here that France was negotiating with Italy

<sup>1</sup> Enclosure in No. 216.



under a threat. No French Ministry could undertake negotiations in such an atmosphere.

5. M. Briand asked me to assure you that he would not miss a single opportunity for resuming conversations, and that, if necessary, he would ask you for your assistance in order to promote a settlement with Rome, but he frankly confessed that he could not help feeling a little anxious if the present state of things continued for long. In this connexion I may mention that Marshal Pétain and General Weygand, the Chief of the General Staff, have lately visited the Franco-Italian frontier with a view to an inspection of the frontier defences.

6. I can only repeat that, until and unless something is said or done by responsible men in Italy which will dissipate the atmosphere of threat and menace at present impairing Franco-Italian relations, I see little prospect of a resumption of conversations between the two Governments.<sup>1</sup>

I have, &c.

TYRRELL

<sup>1</sup> In a private letter to Mr. Henderson accompanying this despatch Lord Tyrrell wrote that M. Briand had asked him to tell Mr. Henderson that he (M. Briand) was 'doing his best to prevent anything irremediable being done (in Paris) with regard to naval estimates that would make an eventual agreement with Italy either difficult or impossible'.

## No. 219

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received June 23)*

*No. 439 [C 4978/29/22]*

Sir,

ROME, June 20, 1930

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 650<sup>1</sup> of the 13th instant regarding Franco-Italian relations.

2. I spoke to the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject yesterday evening and he confirmed to me that there is at present no progress being made in the promised Franco-Italian conversations. Signor Grandi said that some little time ago the French Ambassador had asked him whether Signor Mussolini was inclined to reopen the conversations. Signor Grandi had enquired of M. de Beaumarchais whether the latter was authorised to converse on the subject at once. M. de Beaumarchais had then to some extent hedged, saying that he had to refer further to Paris in the matter. Signor Grandi's impression had been that the French desired to postpone or drag out the negotiations as far as this was possible without their appearing to incur the responsibility for the delay. On a later occasion M. de Beaumarchais had said that no further conversations could take place for the moment owing to the unfavourable atmosphere created by Signor Mussolini's speeches. This was the latest phase of the question.

3. Signor Grandi added that the direct conversations between Signor Mussolini and M. de Beaumarchais, whom he must describe as by no means

<sup>1</sup> No. 216.

easy to deal with, had led to regrettable misunderstandings. He was now glad to say that Signor Mussolini had delegated full authority to him to deal with the whole question and to reopen the conversations with the French Ambassador. He intended to inform M. de Beaumarchais accordingly in the course of next week and to state his readiness to begin at once.

I have, &c.

R. GRAHAM

No. 220

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received June 30)*

No. 454 [C 5237/29/22]

Sir,

ROME, June 25, 1930

With reference to my despatch No. 439<sup>1</sup> of the 20th instant, I have the honour to report that my French colleague was good enough to give me, in strict confidence, an account of a conversation which he had just had with the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject of Franco-Italian relations.

2. Neither party appears to have made any allusion to the naval side of the question. M. de Beaumarchais began by an expression of the great satisfaction with which his Government had learned of the language used by Signor Grandi at Warsaw. Signor Grandi had apparently said to M. Zaleski that, while he recognised that France was the big brother of Poland and must have a predominant influence there, he desired that Italy should also be regarded as a brother, and that the most fraternal relations should be established between Italy and Poland.

3. Signor Grandi then opened the question of Franco-Italian relations. His Excellency said that he considered French policy to be short-sighted in that it would not contemplate certain small sacrifices in order to secure Italian friendship. As M. de Beaumarchais must know, his, Signor Grandi's, position here was one of extreme difficulty. There was a strong party both in and outside the Government which wished to throw Italy into the arms of Germany, and considered that Germany would outstretch those arms to clasp her if Italy brought support to Germany on the question of the *Anschluss*. Signor Grandi added that he himself was strongly adverse to any such course, and could only contemplate drawing nearer to Germany if he reached the stage of despairing of coming to terms with France. Moreover, Signor Mussolini had repeatedly declared his opposition to the *Anschluss*. M. de Beaumarchais replied that probably Signor Grandi was well aware of the feeling in France on the subject. M. Painlevé, when Minister of War in a previous French Government, had declared that although he was a politician of the extreme Left and a devotee of the League of Nations, he must affirm categorically that 'the *Anschluss* meant war.' Moreover, when M. de Beaumarchais himself was Minister in Vienna his Yugoslav colleague, Dr. Milojevic, had told the Austrian Foreign Minister, M. Ramek, that the *Anschluss* would mean the

<sup>1</sup> No. 219.

partition of Austria. Some small portion of that country might possibly go to Germany, but Hungary, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, &c., would be glad to snap up the other pieces.

4. The conversation then returned to the point, and Signor Grandi asked for a more generous treatment by France on the Libyan frontier than had hitherto been envisaged. M. de Beaumarchais emphasised the great difficulties which he had experienced with the French Ministry of the Colonies in securing approval to the last French offer, which included the Oasis of Jebado. The area offered was equal to one-third of Tunis. It was, moreover, greater though possibly less important than the concession made by Great Britain in surrendering Jubaland. But the French offer was accompanied by the condition that, if accepted, it meant that France should henceforth have a perfectly free hand regarding the Italians in Tunis. Signor Grandi at once replied that no Italian Government could possibly accept such a condition. Why could not the French show patience in this question? It would gradually settle itself as France was being only too successful in rapidly assimilating the Italian population. Italy hated her methods of doing so, but could not say a word as they corresponded exactly to those which she was herself employing in the Upper Adige. His Excellency again emphasised that Italian friendship was worth a sacrifice. The conversation terminated on a friendly but inconclusive note.

5. M. de Beaumarchais tells me that the Italians have lost interest in the Oasis of Jebado and want instead part of Tibesti. The Ambassador is leaving for Paris on the 29th instant. He will consult his authorities and will see if anything more can be done to meet Italian aspirations in the direction of concessions in the area north of Tibesti. Possibly instead of Jebado it might be possible to give a longer but narrower strip eastwards, but Tibesti itself could never be ceded. He was not at all sanguine, as he considered that the French Government had gone to the extreme limit in making the concessions already offered. He added that he had been annoyed and embarrassed by Signor Mussolini's denial of the accuracy of his reports of their earlier conversations, in which his Excellency had seemed satisfied with far more reasonable terms. My French colleague said that he had an excellent memory, and had made immediate notes of these conversations. He did not believe that Signor Mussolini had done anything of the kind. His Excellency had forgotten them, and had yielded to the subsequent pressure brought upon him by the Ministries for Foreign Affairs and Colonies to increase his demands.

I have, &c.

R. GRAHAM

#### No. 221

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received July 8)*

*No. 464 [C 5515/29/22]*

Sir,

ROME, June 27, 1930

With reference to my despatch No. 439 of the 20th instant, I have the honour to report that, late yesterday evening, I had an interview with the

Italian Prime Minister. Signor Mussolini, who now concentrates on internal questions, has become almost inaccessible to foreign representatives, and, although I have met him at social and other functions, it was a good many months since I had had a conversation with him. He received me with all the old cordiality.

2. After conversing for a time on local topics, in order to prepare a favourable ground, I said that, as I was proceeding to London in two days' time, I was anxious to carry with me some reassuring statement regarding Franco-Italian relations and the progress of the conversations between the two countries on naval and other matters. At the present time the unsatisfactory state of Italo-French relations was hanging like a black cloud over Europe, and its political was no less deplorable than its economic effect. As regarded the naval question, time was getting on, and it was essential that early progress should be made in order to face the Preparatory Commission in the autumn. As his Excellency knew, His Majesty's Government considered themselves the sincere and disinterested friends of both parties and desired to do everything possible and to explore every avenue in order to bring about a better state of affairs. Was there any suggestion his Excellency could make to me in order that we could help in this sense?

3. Signor Mussolini, whose face had clouded whilst I spoke, replied with some bitterness that he was duly grateful, but feared there was very little that we could do. The French were determined to establish their hegemony in Europe. France had wealth, including an unparalleled store of gold, an overwhelming army and air force, as well as a growing navy, and could, with her smaller allies, establish that hegemony in every part of Continental Europe outside Russia. The French attitude constituted a menace towards Italy. Signor Mussolini had known long ago of the unaccounted-for sums diverted by France towards armaments—a fact which was now arousing so much interest in the international press. His Excellency then produced from a drawer a table showing the immense strength of the French air forces. Italy could not allow the difference in naval and military power between the two countries to become too overwhelming and, however disagreeable to her and however great the strain involved, she was determined to keep up in the race. His Excellency had already felt obliged to divert to armaments a sum of 400 million lire which he would much sooner have spent on public works. He had recently authorised, with some heart-searching, but in deference to the wishes of our Prime Minister, a statement in the Senate that Italy would postpone the construction of her 1930 naval programme if France did likewise. What had been the French response? No answer at all. His Excellency was therefore preparing to distribute the orders for construction to the various yards concerned, although this did not, of course, mean immediate laying down. I may here remark that my naval attaché informs me that the Italian Government are still behind on their 1929 programme. Signor Mussolini continued that the French did not seem anxious to meet the Italians in any way. We had given Jubaland. It was not a great concession, yet it had satisfied the modest Italian aspirations and had led to the most cordial relations between

the two countries. The French, on the other hand, had haggled and delayed. He attached small importance nowadays to the questions of Tunis and Libya. They had been more important a year ago. Yet, in Tunis, why could the French not show more patience and absorb in ten years instead of one? In Libya the vaunted Oasis of Tummo consisted of two trees and a well, and that of Jebado was little better. The question that really mattered was that of parity. Why could not the French maintain the offer which they had freely made at Washington? How could the Fascist Government not insist on the position accorded to Schanzer? The change in the French attitude showed the desire to humiliate Italy.

4. I interposed with the remark that, in all such matters, there must be give and take and a good mutual understanding. Also that so much depended upon atmosphere. The existing atmosphere was, I feared, distinctly unfavourable. When a statesman of Signor Mussolini's eminence made speeches like those of Florence there was bound to be a strong repercussion abroad. No doubt a meaning had been read into them which they did not contain. But it only lay with his Excellency to make one friendly gesture in order to clear the atmosphere. He was shortly to deliver a speech at Naples and possibly elsewhere. Might it not be possible for him, without in any way going back on previous utterances, to hold out an olive branch, to pour oil on the troubled waters and to strengthen the hands of the important and influential circles in France which really desired to come to an understanding with him? He had only to express himself in favour of a frank and full discussion of outstanding difficulties and the readiness of his Government to embark upon them in order to relieve the whole situation.<sup>1</sup>

5. Signor Mussolini retorted, with considerable vehemence: 'You wish me to go back on my Florence speech, and I shall do nothing of the kind. The speeches I made were well thought out, but they have been grossly and wilfully misconstrued ("déformés"). I did not menace anybody or anything. What I said was purely contingent, and I only made it clear that, if Italy was threatened, she would know how to respond.' He added that the circles in France anxious to reach an understanding with him were either of no account or conspicuous by their absence.

6. I said that his Excellency's attitude discouraged me. To what situation were we then drifting? It could only be towards worse relations between France and Italy and a possible climax which I knew his Excellency regarded with the utmost horror. Signor Mussolini replied that certainly no one could regard a possible conflict with greater horror than he did, and he refused to contemplate the idea, but, he added, somewhat disconcertingly: 'Such things

<sup>1</sup> On June 16 Sir R. Vansittart suggested, in a private letter to Sir R. Graham, that he might take steps to influence Signor Mussolini to make some friendly statement in order to counteract the deplorable effect made on French opinion by his recent speeches. Sir R. Graham, after conversation with Signor Grandi, decided to raise the matter with Signor Mussolini. Sir R. Vansittart then asked Lord Tyrrell, in the event of a favourable response from Signor Mussolini, to 'put in a word of encouragement to M. Briand' with a view to the resumption of Franco-Italian conversations as soon as possible.

are always possible.' If the French desired to fix a quarrel they could do so through some incident in Albania, which was the danger spot.

7. I came to the uneasy conclusion that the continuance of our conversation on these lines could serve little useful purpose and might, indeed, do more harm than good. But before passing to other subjects I again emphasised, without, I fear, much effect, how general would be the appreciation if his Excellency felt able to make some friendly gesture in his future speeches, and I also asked him again whether he had any possible suggestion to make in order that we might help to bring about an improvement of conditions. He hesitated for a moment and then said: 'All you could do would be to make the French grant us parity. That is the crux of the whole situation.' His Excellency had spoken throughout with a kind of suppressed irritation which disquieted me, and it is evident that he is under the obsession of a French menace, an obsession which I endeavoured to dissipate, but without much success. But it was also clear that he expects aggression from France and does not, for a moment, contemplate it on his own account. Directly we turned to other topics his former geniality revived and he met me, on the various less important questions laid before him, in a most friendly and considerate spirit.

8. I saw Signor Grandi this evening and said that my conversation with Signor Mussolini had both depressed and disquieted me. I found his Excellency obsessed with a French danger which I could not believe existed, and I feared that the suggestion I had made to him with regard to pouring some oil on the troubled waters in his next speech had had little effect or had, indeed, possibly done more harm than good. Signor Grandi replied that I need have no such fears. He had himself seen Signor Mussolini this morning and had found him very well pleased with his talk with me, which had had an altogether favourable effect upon him. It could not be expected that his Excellency should respond to my suggestion regarding his future speeches. It savoured too much of outside intervention. At the same time, I should find that the Naples speech would not repeat the mistakes made at Florence and Milan or reaffirm such utterances. He could assure me, privately, that no one regretted the Florence speech more than Signor Mussolini himself, and he had written a recent article in the 'Popolo d'Italia' which appeared under his brother's name (see my despatch No. 467<sup>1</sup> of to-day's date) to some extent to counteract the impression it had made. Signor Grandi added that, in so far as the obsession of a French danger was concerned, I had correctly diagnosed Signor Mussolini's state of mind. But it would not take much to change it. In the meantime, a project would be laid before the Council of Ministers to-morrow morning for an increase, though not a large one, in the naval, military and air budgets. It must be remembered that at the moment Yugoslavia had more aeroplanes than Italy. Italy was held tight in the French pincers, but would, sooner or later, escape from them. In the meantime, the Italian Government had made a formal suggestion to M. Briand through the Italian Embassy in Paris regarding the postponement of the mutual 1930 programmes of naval construction.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

9. Later, I saw for a moment the Italian Ambassador in Paris, who is here for a few days. Count Manzoni had been received by Signor Mussolini this morning and had found him irritated at the French habit of never answering any of the communications or proposals made to them, but his Excellency had talked very calmly and composedly on the situation.

I have, &c.

R. GRAHAM

No. 222

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received June 30)*

*No. 465 [C 5215/5215/22]*

Sir,

ROME, June 27, 1930

In a recent conversation with the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, I told Signor Grandi that when I saw Signor Mussolini there was a topic to which I intended to call his attention, not, however, with any idea of complaint. It was the tone lately adopted by the Italian press, and more especially the Fascist press, towards my country. This tone was one of constant depreciation, amounting almost to unfriendliness, and the only exceptions which I could quote were the 'Corriere della Sera' and the 'Lavoro' of Genoa, neither of them Fascist papers. I understood that the most should be made of our internal difficulties in the way of unemployment, taxation, shrinkage of trade, &c., in order to emphasise the superior merits of the Italian régime as at present organised. Malta, too, was a delicate subject on which Italian feeling might have received a certain degree of provocation. But was it necessary for the Italian press to champion Gandhi and the Nationalist cause in India, the anti-British elements in Egypt, to depict the situation in Palestine as entirely our fault, &c.? I would not weary his Excellency by citing other instances. I attached little importance myself to these press utterances, nor did they find much echo in the British press. At the same time they appeared to represent a state of Italian feeling, which did not, to the best of my belief, exist at all. Wherever I or my compatriots went in Italy we were always accorded the most friendly and cordial welcome, and a real sympathy existed between our two nations. But this constant depreciation was certainly having an irritating effect upon the British residents in Italy, who were among the best friends of this country, and was causing a strong reaction among them.

2. Signor Grandi replied that he entirely agreed with all that I had said, and would be glad if I spoke to Signor Mussolini in a similar sense. He had himself received a like impression, and I was perfectly right in thinking that the tone of the press in no way represented Italian feeling. He could tell me that, as regards Malta, he had exerted the whole of his authority to prevent a strong press campaign on the question. He could also tell me, privately, that the Vatican had worked for all it was worth to bring about such a campaign through the representatives of the various newspapers who lived in the Vatican City as correspondents. In this he had succeeded, but his power with

the press was not as great as he would like it to be or as he ought to have. Nominally the Press Bureau was attached to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, but its head, Signor Ferretti, was also under the Ministry of the Interior, and it was from there that he took his orders. Signor Grandi hoped sooner or later to obtain more control. He only wished that he could count upon the press to range itself behind him in the same way that M. Briand could reckon on the French newspapers to obey instructions from the Quai d'Orsay.

3. When I saw Signor Mussolini last night I took the opportunity of mentioning the matter to him. He listened attentively, said that on consideration he thought my impression was correct, and thanked me for bringing it to his notice. He said that press censorship took place after and not before publication. If I wished he would prevent all mention in the papers of controversial subjects like India or Egypt. I replied that this was the last thing I desired. I only asked that the Italian press should treat questions in which we were concerned in a more objective and fairer spirit; in fact, in a spirit more representative of what was really Italian feeling in the matter. His Excellency took a note and said that he would deal with the question at once. He could promise me that within the next few days I should note a complete change in the tone of the press.

4. Later the same evening I happened to meet Signor Ferretti at a special performance at the opera. From the sour look he gave me when we shook hands, I cannot help forming the impression that Signor Mussolini, who always acts with the utmost promptitude, had already brought him to book. Various efforts have been made by the Embassy to come into closer touch with Signor Ferretti, but he is an elusive individual. My French colleague recently aroused a mild resentment in Signor Grandi by describing Signor Ferretti as 'a criminal.' This is no doubt going too far, but I do not consider Signor Ferretti's influence on the press is a salutary one.

I have, &c.

R. GRAHAM

## No. 223

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received July 1)*

*No. 473 [A 4514/1/45]*

Sir,

ROME, June 28, 1930

With reference to the last sentence of paragraph 7 of my despatch No. 464<sup>1</sup> of the 27th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith a translation of the instructions which were sent to the Italian Ambassador in Paris, and which were communicated to me confidentially by Signor Grandi.<sup>2</sup>

I have, &c.

R. GRAHAM

<sup>1</sup> No. 221.

<sup>2</sup> A copy of these instructions was also communicated to Sir R. Vansittart by the Italian Ambassador in London on July 7.



*Signor Grandi to Italian Ambassador in Paris**(Translation.)**June 21, 1930*

In my speech of the 3rd instant to the Royal Senate I made a reference to the proposal put forward by the Italian Government to the effect that France and Italy should suspend the execution of their respective programmes of naval construction for the year 1930 as long as the negotiations which had been adjourned in London, and which were to be renewed by agreement between the three Governments, had not been brought to a conclusion.

I have already had occasion, before my journey to Poland, to telegraph to your Excellency some short information regarding this proposal, but I now consider it useful to furnish you with a more detailed account of its origin and of the circumstances in which it was made, and I request your Excellency to make a communication to M. Briand so that the French Government may be placed directly and precisely *au courant* of everything regarding this question.

During the last phase of the conference in London, and in effect on the morning of the 14th April last, before the opening of the fifth plenary session, Mr. MacDonald asked me to have a private conversation with him, in the course of which he expressed to me his concern at the fact that the failure of Italy and France to participate in the agreement regarding naval construction might give rise to a dangerous competition in armaments between the two countries, and might also render inoperative the agreement which Great Britain was preparing to sign with the other two maritime Powers.

Speaking personally, I told Mr. MacDonald that the Italian Government, whilst firmly maintaining the principle upheld in London, that is to say, Italy's right to build up to the level of the strongest continental European Power, did not intend to avail herself of the liberty of action of which she remained in possession to initiate a policy of construction which might give rise to an armament race between France and Italy.

I told Mr. MacDonald that on my return to Italy I would recommend to my Government the adoption of the following line of conduct: that is to say, that, as long as the negotiations remained open, the programme of Italian construction would not be greater than the French programme, in other words, that it would keep to the principle adopted for the last seven years. I also added that, in order to facilitate the conclusion of future negotiations, I was prepared to propose to my Government that, pending the negotiations, Italy should undertake to suspend, slow down or reduce her programme of construction in the same way and in the same measure as France would accept to do.

On my return to Rome, I submitted the matter to the head of the Government, who approved of the above principles.

In the meantime, during the first days of May, our programme of naval construction for 1930 was published.

On the 9th May, that is to say, two days before my departure for Geneva,

I received a communication from Mr. MacDonald in which the British Prime Minister, in his capacity as president of the Naval Conference, and with reference to our conversation of the 14th April, asked me whether he could interpret the intentions of the Italian Government to the effect that Italy was still disposed to refrain from laying down the constructions provided for in the new programme during the time in which the negotiations remained open.

I replied to Mr. MacDonald in a letter dated the 11th May, confirming the proposal which I had already made in London, that is to say, I was always ready to propose to the Royal Government that, whilst the negotiations for an agreement with France were proceeding, Italy would hold up the laying down in the shipyards of the vessels provided for in the programme of 1930, if France would do the same in regard to the programme voted for this year.

On the 16th May, at Geneva, Mr. Henderson, in thanking me in the name of Mr. MacDonald for my communication, told me that he had received instructions from the Prime Minister to speak to M. Briand. Later in the same day Mr. Henderson informed me that he had communicated our proposal to M. Briand, who had replied that he was not in a position to take a decision in the matter, but that he would speak to M. Tardieu as soon as he had returned to Paris.

Mr. Henderson added that he would keep me informed of the French reply through the British Ambassador in Rome.

Up to date no further communication has been made to the Royal Government on this question.

The above fully explains the circumstances in which our proposal has been put forward. I request your Excellency as a matter of courtesy so to inform M. Briand, leaving with him a written statement of the communication which you will be so good as to make to him in my name.

Your Excellency will at the same time be so good as to tell M. Briand that the Royal Government maintains the proposal already made through Mr. MacDonald and that they will be pleased to learn the views of the French Government in the matter.

GRANDI

## No. 224

*Letter from Mr. A. Henderson to M. Briand and Signor Grandi*

[C 5471/29/22]

My dear Briand (Grandi),

FOREIGN OFFICE, July 2, 1930

As you will remember, I took advantage of my visit to Geneva in May to participate in a conversation between yourself and Signor Grandi (M. Briand), which resulted in an arrangement whereby the outstanding questions as regards Tunis and Libya should be further considered through the usual diplomatic channels.

I do not know whether you are in a position to intimate what progress, if any, has been made as a result of these diplomatic efforts. Though these matters directly concern only France and Italy, there was agreement with you and Signor Grandi (M. Briand) that the settlement of these outstanding questions would create such an atmosphere as would enable further discussions to follow on the naval position in those countries.

Perhaps I ought to say that my own Prime Minister, as Chairman of the London Naval Conference, is anxious to hear that such an understanding has been reached as would assist the objects of the Conference over which he presided.

His anxiety and my own has not been lessened by the use which the opponents of the Naval Treaty in the British Parliament are making, as you will possibly have observed from the debates which have taken place, of the programmes of naval construction in contemplation by France and Italy.

Our difficulties would not be lessened, but possibly increased, should the present relations between France and Italy not undergo improvement and lead to the naval building programmes which have been announced being proceeded with. Might I venture to suggest as a temporary arrangement that a decision should be made not to lay down any part of the new programme before the meeting of the Preparatory Commission in November next?

You will remember that it was understood when we met at Geneva that if my services at some moment might be useful, they were placed unreservedly at the disposal of yourself and Signor Grandi (M. Briand). I have addressed a similar letter to Signor Grandi (M. Briand).

ARTHUR HENDERSON

*To M. Briand.*

P.S. Since writing the above I have seen your interview in the Daily Herald.

## No. 225

*Letter from M. Briand to Mr. A. Henderson*

[C 5692/29/22]

Mon cher Henderson,

PARIS, le 9 Juillet, 1930

J'ai apprécié le sentiment amical qui a inspiré votre lettre du 2 Juillet et, bien que mon interview du Daily Herald ait répondu par avance à l'une des questions que vous me posez, je n'en suis pas moins heureux de l'occasion que vous me donnez de vous fournir, sur l'état des conversations franco-italiennes, des précisions qui ne pourraient sans inconvénient faire actuellement l'objet de communications officielles.

Quoique l'on ait fait à Rome quelques tentatives pour le nier, le résultat des conversations que j'avais eues à Genève avec vous et avec M. Grandi a bien été celui que vous dites: la France et l'Italie allaient reprendre par la voie diplomatique les pourparlers déjà engagés sur les questions politiques qui se posent entre elles (frontière de la Tripolitaine, régime des Italiens en Tunisie); une fois l'atmosphère politique éclaircie (et des contacts directs

entre Ministres pourraient y aider dans la mesure où la négociation diplomatique se serait avérée inefficace), la conversation sur la question navale serait reprise avec de meilleures perspectives de succès . . .<sup>1</sup> La dernière fois où je me suis rencontré à Genève avec M. Grandi, je lui ai annoncé que, dès mon retour à Paris, j'envverrais à M. de Beaumarchais les instructions nécessaires . . .<sup>1</sup>

Mon interview du Daily Herald a rappelé dans quelle situation le Gouvernement français s'est alors trouvé placé. Le discours de Livourne avait été prononcé lorsque nous étions encore à Genève: on pouvait feindre de ne pas l'avoir entendu. Mais il y a eu ensuite celui de Florence, celui de Milan, et vous savez quelle émotion ils ont causée, non seulement dans mon pays, mais dans toute l'Europe. Enfin, après ces discours, ce furent les regrettables incidents dirigés contre l'Agence consulaire de France à Bari, incidents au sujet desquels le Gouvernement italien fut d'ailleurs amené à exprimer ses très vifs regrets.

Vous voudrez bien reconnaître que, pendant toute cette période, le Gouvernement français s'est scrupuleusement abstenu de toute parole ou de tout acte susceptible d'envenimer les choses, et cela au risque parfois de surprendre et de mécontenter l'opinion française elle-même.

Quoi qu'il en soit, engager une conversation dans ces conditions, alors que la presse italienne, étroitement contrôlée par le Gouvernement fasciste, tenait à l'égard de la France le langage que vous savez, eût été paraître céder à une inadmissible pression, et il importait par conséquent de ne pas précipiter les choses. Pourtant M. de Beaumarchais a repris le contact et j'ai dit au Comte Manzoni qu'il dépendait du Gouvernement italien que l'entretien se renouât. Je dois d'ailleurs ajouter que le langage que m'a tenu depuis son retour de Rome l'Ambassadeur d'Italie me conduit à penser que, revenant sur la solution à laquelle s'était rallié à Genève M. Grandi, c'est la question navale que M. Mussolini voudrait voir placer maintenant au premier plan des conversations: peut-on mieux dire que les soi-disant griefs que l'Italie croit avoir contre nous n'ont pas l'importance qu'on leur a complaisamment prêtée au delà des Alpes? En tout cas, il y a là le risque de nouveaux délais et croyez bien que ces retards ne nous sont nullement agréables: le Gouvernement français n'ignore pas dans quel embarras le Gouvernement britannique peut, de ce fait, se trouver placé en ce qui concerne le traité naval. Durant la Conférence de Londres, notre Délégation a donné de sa bonne volonté trop de preuves pour que j'aie besoin de vous redire que nous ne souhaitons pas vous mettre en difficulté. A la séance de clôture de la Conférence, j'avais d'ailleurs déclaré publiquement que la France souhaitait que l'accord à trois pût devenir un accord à cinq et qu'en attendant sa bonne volonté restait entière pour faciliter l'application de l'accord à trois: c'était une promesse; nous ne l'avons pas oubliée.

Il y a quelques jours, le Comte Manzoni — en joignant d'ailleurs à sa communication un historique de la question auquel je ne puis, pour ma part, souscrire — m'a officiellement proposé de suspendre, jusqu'à l'issue des

<sup>1</sup> This punctuation does not indicate any omission in the text.

conversations entre les deux pays, les mises sur cale des bâtiments prévus par les nouveaux programmes français et italien. Par une note en date du 5 Juillet,<sup>1</sup> dont M. de Fleuriau vous remettra officiellement copie,<sup>2</sup> j'ai répondu—évitant toute polémique inutile — que le Gouvernement français avait déjà décidé de ne faire procéder avant le mois de Décembre prochain à aucune mise sur cale. Ainsi la solution provisoire que vous me suggérez est, en ce qui concerne la France, déjà acceptée.

Vous me permettrez cependant, dans cette lettre personnelle, de m'expliquer très franchement avec vous sur ce point: le programme français dont il s'agit, a été voté par le Parlement il y a déjà huit mois; il devait s'appliquer à partir du 1<sup>er</sup> Janvier 1930; il tend, pour une large part, au remplacement de bâtiments vieilliss; à Londres, les experts français ont eu l'occasion de s'en entretenir avec leurs collègues britanniques et d'expliquer les raisons qui le rendent nécessaire. Vous savez qu'à ce moment le programme italien n'existait pas, que, lorsqu'on pressait les marins italiens de le produire, ils répondaient qu'ils ne pourraient donner d'autres chiffres que les chiffres français: de toute évidence, le programme arrêté au mois de Mai — pour une année budgétaire commençant au 1<sup>er</sup> Juillet, — est un programme *politique* établi pour étayer la prétention à la parité.

Entre les deux aucune comparaison n'est possible et notre décision, en ce qui concerne le programme en cours ne doit à aucun degré être comprise comme une concession à la 'parité'.

J'ai eu d'ailleurs l'occasion, au cours d'une visite que m'a faite le 7 Juillet l'Ambassadeur d'Italie, de lui faire remarquer que si les discussions devaient porter entre nous sur des questions de prestige ou sur des principes posés dans l'absolu, elles aboutiraient à la même impasse qu'à Londres. Si, au contraire, on veut bien se placer objectivement en face des réalités et se préoccuper simplement de jeter les bases d'un accord pour une durée de 6 ans, comme l'a fait le traité naval en ce qui concerne trois Puissances, une solution acceptable peut être obtenue. J'ajoute qu'il ne m'a pas paru que le Comte Manzoni accueillit cette suggestion avec défaveur.

Quant à la procédure des futures négociations, j'ai dit à l'Ambassadeur d'Italie, comme je l'avais déjà dit à M. Grandi, que je n'avais sur ce point aucune idée préconçue. Je considère seulement qu'il serait illusoire de vouloir régler la question directement entre Ministres responsables avant que les négociations préliminaires aient préparé les solutions. Mais pour ces négociations elles-mêmes, plusieurs méthodes sont possibles. On peut causer à Paris par l'entremise du Comte Manzoni, on peut causer à Rome par celle de l'Ambassadeur de France; on peut enfin provoquer des contacts directs entre les experts des deux pays, qui ont déjà été en rapport à Londres, et si cette méthode paraît de nature à faciliter une entente, je n'y verrai, pour ma part, que des avantages.

Si tout se passait normalement, rien n'empêcherait qu'au mois de Septembre, à Genève, M. Grandi et moi missions le point final à ces pourparlers.

<sup>1</sup> This date should read '7 Juillet'.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of this note, see No. 228, enclosure 1.

Telle est, mon cher ami, l'image exacte de la situation.

En vous répétant combien je me félicite que vous m'ayez fourni l'occasion de vous la décrire personnellement, je vous remercie de m'avoir redit qu'en cas de besoin vous étiez prêt à nous prêter votre concours pour aboutir à une issue favorable. Je ne manquerai pas de m'en souvenir, le cas échéant.

Bien amicalement dévoué

ARISTIDE BRIAND

No. 226

*Mr. A. Henderson to Lord Tyrrell (Paris)*

*No. 66 Telegraphic [A 4649/1/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 10, 1930*

Your telegram No. 123<sup>1</sup> (of July 8th: decision of French Government to lay down no new ships this year).

Please offer orally to Monsieur Briand my congratulations on this decision, which is an earnest of the French Government's sincere desire to promote an early solution of the problems of naval limitation still outstanding.

In view of probable questions in Parliament, I should be glad to know as soon as public reference may be made to this decision.

I would like you to take opportunity when you see M. Briand to express to him informally my great personal gratification at the completion of the evacuation of the Rhineland<sup>2</sup> which has given great satisfaction in this country.

I remember with gratitude the very important part taken by M. Briand in bringing this about.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter VI.

No. 227

*Letter from Lord Tyrrell (Paris) to Mr. A. Henderson*

*[C 6030/29/22]*

PARIS, *July 11, 1930*

I accomplished this morning the very agreeable task of conveying to Briand your appreciation of his attitude and performance both as regards Italy and the Rhine evacuation.

2. In view of the severe attacks made upon him here by the reactionary press he was very pleased to get your messages, which had a soothing effect, and he asked me to tell you what a pleasure it was to him to cooperate with you and how fruitful that cooperation had been ever since you came into office. He felt assured that its continuation was the best guarantee for the success of the policy which both you and he had at heart.

3. He wished you to remember particularly the assurance he had given you on taking leave of you in London, when he told you that he would

endeavour to prevent the building of any new ships before the end of the year in order to facilitate the task of the preparatory commission which is to meet at Geneva in November.

4. He asked me to suggest to you whether you could not do something to persuade the Italian Government to curb their very violent press attacks upon France. They made his task here very hard but he thought we might take advantage of the severe censorship which existed under a dictatorship in Italy to persuade Mussolini to make use of it in order to promote the conversations which he, Briand, was now most anxious to pursue.

5. I hope you will forgive me if I repeat again that we should do our utmost to make Briand's task easy as he is the best guarantee for promoting the policy which I know you wish pursued as regards Europe.

TYRRELL

P.S. Briand asked me to tell you that he hoped you would never hesitate to write to him direct as you had done on this occasion whenever you thought it useful to do so.

No. 228

*Signor Bordonaro to Mr. A. Henderson (Received July 14)*

[A 4761/1/45]

(Translation.)

Sir,

ITALIAN EMBASSY, July 12, 1930

In fulfilment of instructions received from my Government I have the honour to transmit to your Excellency a copy of the note sent by the French Government to Count Manzoni on the 7th instant on the subject of the Italian proposal to suspend naval shipbuilding, together with a copy of the Italian Government's reply to that note, dated the 11th instant.

I have, &c.

A. C. BORDONARO

ENCLOSURE I IN No. 228

*Note from the French Government handed to the Italian Ambassador at Paris  
on July 7, 1930*

(Translation.)

On the 24th June last his Excellency, Count Manzoni, was good enough to communicate to M. Briand the translation of a telegram, dated the 21st June, from Signor Grandi. It follows from this communication that during the negotiations which are to be undertaken between the two Governments as a result of the London Conference the Italian Government proposes to suspend the laying down of the vessels provided for in its recent programme if the French Government is disposed to take a similar step with regard to the execution of its own programme for the current year.

As the Italian Government is aware, the instalment of the Statut Naval in respect of the year 1930 was voted by the French Parliament in the month of December last, that is to say, before the Naval Conference had opened. Further, during the conference, when the intentions of the Italian Government in regard to its future naval programme were still unknown, the French delegation took occasion to emphasise that their Government could not give up the execution of the new construction which had been authorised by Parliament, and which was destined, for the most part, to the replacement, recognised as indispensable, of over-age vessels.

In spite of this situation the Government of the Republic, which is certainly not less anxious than the Italian Government that the future conversations shall be successful and which desires to see them begun under favourable conditions, had already considered measures which would permit of this objective being attained. M. Briand is happy to be able to inform his Excellency, Count Manzoni, that the French Government will not lay down any of the vessels included in the programme voted at the end of 1929 before the month of December next.

The French Government is pleased to hope that in this interval conditions which will permit the hoped for agreement between the two Governments to be brought about will be found to be present.

MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
PARIS, *July 7, 1930.*

ENCLOSURE 2 IN NO. 228

*Italian Note to the French Government*

(*Translation.*)

On the 24th ultimo Count Manzoni confirmed to M. Briand the Italian Government's proposal to refrain, during the progress of the negotiations for an agreement between the two countries, from laying down the vessels comprised in the French and Italian 1930 programmes.

On the 7th instant M. Briand acquainted Count Manzoni that the Government of the French Republic, for their part, would not proceed before next December to lay down the ships included in the programme for 1930 voted at the end of 1929.

The Italian Government, in confirmation of their proposal to suspend laying down vessels of the 1930 programmes during the entire progress of the negotiations, are meanwhile glad to note what the French Government have been good enough to communicate to them and, for their part, will refrain from laying down the vessels comprised in their 1930 programme until next December.

They hope that by this date the conversations between the two Governments will have attained a favourable result.

ROME, *July 11, 1930.*



*Letter from Signor Grandi to Mr. A. Henderson*

[C 5771/29/22]

(*Translation.*)

Dear Henderson,

ROME, *July 13, 1930*

I received your letter<sup>1</sup> after I had already instructed Signor Bordonaro to communicate to you the reply which I made to M. Briand on the question of suspending the laying down of the ships included in the 1930 programmes.

As you are aware, I had proposed to postpone, during the progress of the negotiations for an agreement between France and Italy, laying down the vessels of the respective 1930 programmes.

The day before yesterday I received a communication from M. Briand in which it is stated that the French Government for their part will not proceed before next December to lay down the ships included in the naval programme voted at the end of 1929.

I have replied with a memorandum which terminates with the following words:

‘The Italian Government, in confirmation of their proposal to suspend laying down vessels of the 1930 programmes during the entire progress of the negotiations, are meanwhile glad to note what the French Government have been good enough to communicate to them and, for their part, will refrain from laying down the vessels comprised in their 1930 programme until next December. They hope that by this date the conversations between the two Governments will have attained a favourable result.’

As you will see, the question of postponing the laying down of the ships of the 1930 programme until after the convocation of the Preparatory Commission is already favourably settled.

As regards the particular Franco-Italian questions (status of the Italians in Tunis and southern boundary of Libya), on the 28th June I instructed Signor Bordonaro to acquaint you that the French Ambassador here, in his last conversation with me, stated that he considered it appropriate to wait for some time yet before resuming the negotiations, and added that his instructions were unchanged.

Since that conversation M. de Beaumarchais has left Rome and matters have remained at the said stage. I hope, however, that the negotiations, to the prosecution of which the Italian Government has been and is always favourably disposed, will be resumed from the point reached with the Italian note of last September, and concluded as soon as possible.

Yours cordially

DINO GRANDI

<sup>1</sup> No. 224.

No. 230

*Letter from Mr. A. Henderson to M. Briand*

[C 5692/29/22]

My dear Briand,

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 15, 1930*

Please accept my best thanks for your letter of July 9th<sup>1</sup> in which you were good enough to send me a copy of the memorandum addressed to Count Manzoni on July 5th<sup>2</sup> and fully to describe the steps by which you intend to pursue negotiations with His Majesty's Government.

You will, I think, already have heard from Tyrrell with what pleasure I found that your Government had already decided to lay down none of the ships covered by the current naval vote till December of this year. I now learn with equal pleasure that as far as the French Government are concerned no difficulties can arise as regards the channel or methods through which conversations on the naval question will be conducted, and that, if things proceed normally, you hope to bring the issue to the point of solution by September.

In view of our close concern in any negotiations on the naval question for the purpose of completing the work of the London Conference, I venture to hope that you will add to your kindness by keeping me informed of the course things take.

I am submitting to the Cabinet tomorrow the reply to your memorandum on the Federal Union of Europe,<sup>3</sup> and I hope it will be in your hands in the course of the next two or three days.

ARTHUR HENDERSON

<sup>1</sup> No. 225.

<sup>2</sup> This date should read 'July 7th'.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter IV.

No. 231

*Lord Tyrrell (Paris) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received July 16)*

No. 808 [A 4842/1/45]

Sir,

PARIS, *July 15, 1930*

You will have noticed the statements made in the newspapers in the last few days with regard to the meaning of the undertaking given by the French Government respecting the laying down of the ships of the French 1930 naval programme. According to the memorandum communicated to the Italian Ambassador in Paris on the 5th July,<sup>1</sup> this undertaking was that 'the French Government, so far as it is concerned, will not lay down before December next any vessel contained in the programme voted at the end of 1929.'

2. On the 11th July the Minister for Marine was asked in the Chamber of Deputies for an assurance that the undertaking not to lay down any vessel before December next did not imply any delay in the execution of the programme of new construction which the Navy Commission of the Chamber fixed in January 1930, when it voted the 1930 programme. M. Dumesnil

<sup>1</sup> This date should read 'July 7th'.

replied: 'I am in full agreement with the interpretation of the situation just given by the reporter of the Navy Commission. The statement that the laying down of the vessels comprised in that section of the naval programme voted in January last will only take place at the end of the present year is a statement of fact, but this will not delay by a single day the work on that section of the new construction which Parliament has voted.'

3. I understand that M. Dumesnil's statement that the completion of the 1930 programme will not be delayed is correct. No vessel will be laid down before December 1930, but this does not mean that no preparations for proceeding with the 1930 programme are being made. Material is being collected, and as much shop work as possible is being done so that the postponement of the laying down of the ships will cause no delay in the final completion of the programme. What is really happening is that the normal process is being to some extent reversed. Normally the keels would have been laid down as stocks became vacant, and material built on to the keels as the necessary preparatory work in the shops was completed. Now this preparatory work will be in a more advanced state by the time the keels are actually laid at the end of the year. The work of assembly will therefore take place more rapidly.

4. With the greater part of the details discussed in the preceding paragraph M. Briand's undertaking to the Italian Ambassador is not concerned. All he promised was not to lay down any vessel before December next. This undertaking will be observed, and this is the undertaking which was designed to impress public opinion and to create an atmosphere in which the negotiations with Italy could proceed and in which the task of the Preparatory Disarmament Commission could be continued. More could have hardly been promised by France or, indeed, by Italy in view of the impossibility of verifying the observance of any wider undertaking by the other party to the bargain.

5. It has been emphasised to me that if the negotiations which are about to open succeed, there is nothing in M. Dumesnil's statement of the 11th July to prevent a reduction of the 1930 programme. In such circumstances all that would be necessary would be for the Government to explain the new situation to the Chambers and ask them to consent to a reduction of the programme. Should the programme and, therefore, the number of ships laid down be reduced, the work now being done in the shops would not be lost but would be available for the programmes of future years.

I have, &c.

TYRRELL

## No. 232

*Note by Sir R. Vansittart for Mr. MacDonald*

[A 5304/1/45]

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 6, 1930

I think you may like to know the present position of the Franco-Italian question.

First, as regards the naval negotiations. Both Governments appear to be in agreement that the preliminary conversations should start at Paris about the middle of this month, nominally between Briand and Manzoni, but in fact between Massigli and Rosso. The purpose of these conversations is to prepare the way for the conversations between Ministers which will take place at Geneva during the meetings of the Council and the Assembly.

According to a communication made by the Italian Ambassador on the 2nd instant, the Italian Government have asked the French Government whether they agree that Massigli and Rosso should be assisted by naval experts; if so, the Italian Government propose to appoint Ruspoli and Raineri-Biscia. Rosso will arrive in Paris on August the 15th or 16th.

As regards the question of British participation in these preliminary conversations, Bordonaro stated that the Italian Government had informed the French Government that they understood that the British Government felt they should be represented and had added that there was no objection from the Italian point of view to such representation. The Italian Government asked for an expression of the French Government's views on this point.

This is supplemented by a letter just received from [Sir] Ronald Graham reporting a conversation with Guariglia, the Italian Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, who declared that Italy was only too willing that a British expert should participate either from the beginning or at any stage which we considered desirable.

The French, on the other hand, appear to be opposed to our participation in these preliminary naval conversations. Massigli, in conversation with a member of the Embassy staff, referring to Fleuriau's having discouraged Mr. Henderson from asking officially for a British representative to be present at the conversations, stated that Briand had approved Fleuriau's attitude. Massigli evidently thought that it would be better that the naval talks should begin with Rosso alone. We have since learned that Massigli's language on this occasion has been approved by Briand.

I have reported the above to the Secretary of State and he agrees with me in thinking that, before doing anything further, we must wait and see what reply the French return to the Italian communication stating that British participation would be agreeable. If we hear nothing further in a week we will ask the Embassy to make further enquiries on this point.

There remain the so-called political negotiations, i.e. the absorption of the Italian population in Tunisia and the rectification of the Franco-Italian frontier in Libya in favour of Italy. Up till now these negotiations have enjoyed a fictitious importance through the fact that the French originally stipulated that they should precede any naval discussions. The French have, however, now acquiesced in both naval and political discussions being carried on concurrently. The latter are thereby deprived of most of their importance and, inasmuch as they are the symptoms and not the causes of the strained relations between France and Italy, do not interest us directly. As soon as Franco-Italian relations become normal they will probably be solved without difficulty.

For some time past a desultory discussion has been going on as to whether these political negotiations should be carried on in Paris or in Rome. There is a good deal to be said in favour of Paris but the French, in a comprehensive note which they have now addressed to the Italian Government, have definitely proposed Rome. As Grandi is away on leave until the end of the month this will, in practice, mean that there will be practically no time for discussions to develop out of the recent French note before Grandi departs for Geneva. The French idea probably is that any really serious discussion should be carried on in Geneva between Briand and Grandi.

It may be worth while mentioning that M. Berthelot in a recent conversation<sup>1</sup> said that he personally was in favour of these political discussions being extended so as to include the thorny question of France's alliance with Yugoslavia which Italy views with such suspicion and alarm; his idea being that the alliance should be replaced by some sort of tripartite agreement between France, Italy and Yugoslavia. This, however, is merely his personal opinion and although he had hopes of converting M. Tardieu and M. Briand to his view, he realised that public opinion in France might make it impossible for the French Government to agree to any change of policy in this direction. Since French policy in Yugoslavia is undoubtedly one of the major causes of Franco-Italian friction, Lord Tyrrell has been asked to inform M. Berthelot that His Majesty's Government would welcome such a tripartite agreement as a means of allaying Italian fears and suspicions, provided, of course, that it was in accordance with the Covenant of the League.

R. VANSITTART

<sup>1</sup> This conversation (between Lord Tyrrell and M. Berthelot) took place on July 25.

## No. 233

*Mr. R. H. Campbell (Paris) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received September 22)*

*No. 1039 [A 6198/1/45]*

Sir,

PARIS, *September 16, 1930*

In his despatch No. 883<sup>1</sup> of the 31st July last, His Majesty's Ambassador furnished you with a summary of the developments which had occurred up to that date in connexion with the Franco-Italian conversations on the naval and other pending questions.<sup>2</sup>

2. It will be recollected that towards the end of July the French Ambassador in Rome informed the Italian Government that the French Government were willing that the naval conversations should be continued in Paris by M. Briand and the Italian Ambassador, if necessary with the assistance of experts. Early in August the Italian Ambassador in London, in a conversation with Mr. Craigie, stated that instructions had been sent to Count

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

<sup>2</sup> In view of their technical nature, detailed reports of the negotiations have not been included here.

Manzoni to inform the French Government that the Italian Government concurred in the suggestion that discussions on the naval question should be opened at Paris as soon as possible, and proposed that they should in the first place be carried on between experts. It was hoped that these discussions, which would in the first place be between Signor Rosso and M. Massigli, would take place in August, and might make some progress before the next meeting of the League of Nations at Geneva. Although the Italian Government were ready to welcome the presence of a British expert at the proposed conversations, His Majesty's Government, in deference to the views of the French Government, decided that, provided His Majesty's representative in Paris were kept closely informed of the progress of the negotiations, it would not be necessary for a British expert to take part at that stage.

3. At the beginning of August Count Manzoni made a communication to M. Berthelot in the sense foreshadowed by the Italian Ambassador in London, and on the 8th August M. Briand secured the approval of the French Cabinet for the opening of conversations between Signor Rosso and M. Massigli. A few days later M. Massigli repeated to His Majesty's Embassy his previous undertaking to keep it informed day by day of what took place in the course of the conversations. The first meeting, which was of quite a formal and general character, took place on the 21st August.

4. At the meeting on the following day Signor Rosso submitted a somewhat complicated proposal providing for limitation by categories with a total tonnage limit *and* a numerical limit in each category. It was hoped that the scheme might be worked into the framework of the Treaty of London, and that, as between France and Italy, it would get round the parity difficulty by providing for theoretical parity disguised by the fact that, in practice, the figures attained by the two countries would not be identical. While the two fleets would eventually be composed of the same *number* of vessels in each category, Italy, owing to her practice of building smaller vessels than France, would be unable to reach the total tonnage limit by some 30,000, while if, as was probable, she continued her present practice, this disparity would in all probability be considerably further increased. It is difficult to make this clear without a number of elaborate tables, such as I furnished in semi-official correspondence during the course of the discussions. I will not, however, burden you with them in the present despatch, which is intended only to be a narrative summary.

5. M. Massigli raised objections to Signor Rosso's proposal, on the ground that (a) it would give Italy not only theoretical parity, but might enable her to attain parity in practice, except for the small difference of 30,000 referred to above; and (b) that it took no account of pre-Washington cruisers, of which France had a certain number which it was necessary she should retain.

6. On the 28th August M. Massigli informed Signor Rosso that his proposal was unacceptable, and in his turn suggested that France and Italy should confine themselves to an agreement, valid up to 1936, based on Signor

Rosso's figures, but suppressing the limit on total tonnage in each category, and providing for a French predominance in light cruisers. This suggestion was rejected by Signor Rosso, on the ground that the suppression of the total tonnage limit and the retention only of the limit on numbers would place Italy at too serious a disadvantage. (It would, in practice, have increased the disparity in total tonnage to the advantage of France.) He then proposed a modification of his original plan, making certain concessions to France, the effect of which would have been to increase her allowance of light cruisers, on condition of her acceptance of the following special régime for submarines: Italy to accept the British-American-Japanese figure of 52,700 tons embodied in the Treaty of London; while France, after the completion of her 1930 programme, would build no further submarines at all for the remainder of the period of the agreement. M. Massigli considered that this scheme still represented too obvious a recognition of the Italian claim to parity, and that a French submarine holiday would be looked upon in France as a surrender to Italy. There was the further technical objection arising from a complete cessation of work in the yards.

7. On the 4th September His Majesty's Embassy was informed that M. Massigli and Signor Rosso could make no further progress, and that each had agreed to report the course of the discussions to his Government in the hope that the fresh ground might yet offer the germ of a solution when the discussions were resumed by the principal delegates in Geneva.

8. From the outset the negotiations were overshadowed by the parity difficulty. What in reality M. Massigli and Signor Rosso were endeavouring to do, and in what they failed, was to find some formula which would enable Italy to show that she had obtained parity, and France to show that she had not accorded it. As might be expected, this task was too much for them. Until some entirely fresh basis is found, or until Italy is prepared at least to allow her claim to parity to remain in abeyance for the period of a provisional agreement, it is difficult to see how the present *impasse* can be overcome.

9. As regards the other questions pending between France and Italy, namely, those connected with Tunis, Libya and the Arbitration Treaty, no progress has been made. The conversations, which are to reopen in Rome, have, in fact, not yet begun.<sup>1</sup>

I have, &c.

R. H. CAMPBELL

<sup>1</sup> M. Briand informed Mr. Henderson at Geneva that, in spite of Signor Mussolini's speech at Leghorn, the French Government had presented a note, a month later, to the Italian Government proposing the opening of negotiations. No answer had been received to this note. Meanwhile the Italian Ambassador in Paris had expressed the opinion to the French Foreign Office that the political questions were of no moment and that the naval questions were the vital issue. In the middle of August Signor Grandi was reminded, without effect, that the French note had not been answered. On meeting Signor Grandi at Geneva, M. Briand had inquired whether he was ready to open negotiations. In reply Signor Grandi 'expressed regret at being obliged to leave for Rome that night'.

*Memorandum by Mr. Craigie*

[A 7151/1/45]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 20, 1930*

M. Massigli called to see me to-day, saying he wished to inform me of the latest stage of the Franco-Italian conversations on naval disarmament. He had a further conversation with Signor Rosso the day before, and had told him that he did not see how any French Government could accept that part of Signor Rosso's proposal which involved the placing of a maximum total tonnage figure in each category which would be equal for both France and Italy. It was true that this equality was to be theoretical only, since actually Italy would not be building up to these maxima. Nevertheless under Signor Rosso's proposal the *theory* of parity would have been decided in Italy's favour, and Italy would be in a strong position in claiming at the 1935 Conference that the principle of parity in battleships having been accepted at Washington and the principle of parity in cruisers and auxiliary craft having been accepted as a result of the present negotiations, France could have no further right to deny Italy's right to 'build up' to parity after 1936. In other words the question of principle would, under the Italian proposals, definitely be prejudiced in the Italians' favour, although the Italians were constantly asserting that they would be prepared to leave the question of principle undecided until 1935. M. Massigli had therefore suggested to Signor Rosso that the proposed total figures giving parity in each category should be dropped leaving only parity in the number of units. The tonnage limitation, however, would be applied indirectly by each side agreeing that the maximum displacement of units to be constructed under the treaty would not exceed X per cent. of the total tonnage of existing units. This system could be made to work out so as to give total tonnage limitations very similar to those proposed by the Italians, leaving the question of principle entirely undecided and unaffected until the 1935 Conference. Signor Rosso, while appearing personally not unsympathetic to this proposal, said he could not accept it, particularly as he had only that morning received an instruction from Rome that he was to be particularly firm 'on the question of prestige'. He said, however, that he would think the matter over further and another conversation would probably take place in the course of the next few days.

M. Massigli added that according to reports from their Embassy at Rome the Italian Government had been much encouraged by the success of the National Socialists<sup>1</sup> in Germany, and there were many who thought that Italy could now afford to adopt a firmer attitude towards France in the matter of naval disarmament. M. Massigli said that if it were true that Italian policy was to be swayed by such considerations as these, and to be subject to such constant fluctuations, he despaired of ever reaching an agree-

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter VI.



ment. I said that so far as I was aware, we had no confirmation of any such intention on the part of the Italian Government.

As to the figures themselves, M. Massigli told me privately and confidentially that he would not really be very pessimistic once this miserable question of principle had been got out of the way. The great difficulty was that France must have one more 8-inch gun cruiser than Italy—he said something about ‘8 to 7’. For my personal and private information only he added that he thought there was now a good chance of the French Ministry of Marine adopting a less uncompromising policy in the matter of submarines. An important meeting of the Conseil Naval de Guerre (or some such title) was to be held early in October at which he hoped that the school which thought that France was going too far in the matter of submarine construction would gain the upper hand. I mentioned that I had been rather disappointed at the accounts of the language held by M. Dumesnil to Mr. Alexander in Paris<sup>1</sup> on the subject of French tonnage levels, but M. Massigli said that speaking to me as an old friend I should not take what M. Dumesnil said too seriously, nor as the official view of the French Government.

R. L. C.

<sup>1</sup> On September 4–5 Mr. Alexander paid an unofficial visit to Rome. He did not see Signor Mussolini, but, in the course of a long conversation with Admiral Sirianni, Italian Minister of Marine, spoke of the necessity of the reduction of any figures agreed between France and Italy to a level which would admit of their inclusion in the London Naval Treaty and not involve the invocation by His Majesty’s Government of Article 21 of this Treaty. Mr. Alexander then went to Paris. Here also his visit was unofficial, but he discussed the naval question with M. Dumesnil, French Minister of Marine. M. Dumesnil stated that France could not give way on the question of parity, but would be ready to leave the question of principle aside until the next Naval Conference and to make an agreement with Italy on the lines of a restricted building programme within the limits of Part III of the London Naval Treaty and at the same time maintaining the existing disparity between the French and Italian fleets.

## No. 235

*Mr. A. Henderson to Lord Tyrrell (Paris)*<sup>1</sup>

*No. 2025 [A 6317/1/45]*

My Lord,

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 1, 1930*

M. Briand having promised to let me know, before I left Geneva, the exact situation in regard to the Franco-Italian naval negotiations, I saw him on the 26th September.

2. He told me that the conversations between the experts had, for the moment, yielded no successful result,<sup>2</sup> but that he had asked the Italian Government to consider that there was only a suspension of negotiations;

<sup>1</sup> Also to His Majesty’s representative at Rome (No. 1080), *mutatis mutandis*.

<sup>2</sup> On September 23 Signor Grandi informed Mr. Osborne (Rome) that the naval negotiations had reached a deadlock on the presentation by the French experts of ‘wholly unacceptable counter-proposals’.

he himself would return to Paris and meet the Cabinet on the 3rd October, and in the meanwhile he hoped that the whole question, naval and political, might be regarded as left open. He then asked M. Massigli, who was present, to explain more in detail the position in regard to the naval conversations.

3. M. Massigli explained the Italian suggestion, which had been put forward in Paris, for limitation of vessels in each category by numbers as well as by tonnage. The suggestion was an ingenious one in many ways. The actual plan put forward by the Italians certainly presented points of difficulty; there was a question about the replacement of vessels lost at sea, and there was the much more difficult question of 8-inch cruisers, as regards which Italy demanded actual parity. On the other hand, the Italian offer had the appearance of being more accommodating in the matter of submarines, though this was more an appearance than a reality.

4. There was, of course, also the vital difficulty that if the Italians built up to the same numbers there was only the 'probability' that France would retain a sufficient superiority in tonnage. Moreover, under such an arrangement, the French and Italians would come to the conference in 1935 with the whole question of parity already prejudged.

5. To get over this, M. Massigli had made to Signor Rosso a suggestion, on his own responsibility and without consulting his authorities. This was to the effect that, for the present, there should be no more discussion of the principle of parity and that the two parties should agree upon the actual units which they would build, which would, in fact, produce equality in numbers by 1936. This agreement would be accompanied by another agreement, in the form of an exchange of notes or any other form, to the effect that, in actual practice, the two parties would continue to build vessels of the type hitherto in service in the respective navies. Italy had shorter communications which did not necessitate vessels of the larger type required by France for her particular needs, and the idea would be simply to perpetuate till 1936 the practice hitherto followed. Unfortunately, the Italians had now replied that they found this suggestion unacceptable and that they regarded it as a step back from the 'parity of programmes' which they alleged (and the French denied) had been conceded in London.

6. In reply to my enquiry whether there was any way in which I could assist, M. Briand suggested that I should support his request to Signor Scialoja to urge the Italian Government to keep the question open until he, M. Briand, had been able to consult with his Cabinet. This I readily agreed to do, and undertook also to send a message through His Majesty's Ambassador in Rome.<sup>1</sup>

7. I expressed my regret at hearing that the negotiations had not yet succeeded, and my anxiety on two points: in the first place, unless agreement were reached beforehand, the situation at the Preparatory Committee would

<sup>1</sup> Sir R. Graham was instructed accordingly on September 26. He replied on September 29 that M. Briand had been informed that the Italian Government were 'quite ready to consider the negotiations as only suspended and all doors still open'.

be very difficult, and in the second place I was anxious that no agreement reached should contemplate figures that would involve bringing into play article 21 of the London Naval Treaty.

8. As regards the former point, M. Massigli expressed the personal opinion that the situation might not be so difficult; it might be possible for the Preparatory Committee to get agreement on its draft, with, of course, Italian reservations.

I am, &c.

ARTHUR HENDERSON

No. 236

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir R. Graham (Rome)*<sup>1</sup>

*No. 1081 [A 6318/1/45]*

Sir,

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 1, 1930*

I saw Signor Scialoja on the afternoon of the 26th September and informed him of my conversation with M. Briand in the morning, a summary of which was communicated to your Excellency in my despatch No. 1080<sup>2</sup> of even date.

2. I explained that, as a member of the League and as one of the Powers who took part in the London Naval Conference, His Majesty's Government were specially interested that there should be no actual break in the Franco-Italian negotiations. It was extremely important that some agreement should be reached between France and Italy before the meeting of the Preparatory Disarmament Conference in November and that that agreement should not be of such a nature as to cause any of the signatories of the Three-Power Agreement to avail themselves of their rights under article 21. M. Briand had told me that immediately he returned to Paris he would do his best to ensure the adoption of a sincerely conciliatory attitude by his Government. I hoped Signor Scialoja would see his way to communicate what I had said to Signor Grandi and impress on him how strongly I felt that there should be no interruption in the negotiations.

3. His Excellency, after recapitulating the story of the negotiations, said that he, for his part, entirely agreed with me that there should be no break in the negotiations. Public opinion had, however, been worked up by ill-considered press campaigns, and, now that such widespread publicity had been given to them, it might be difficult for the negotiations to proceed smoothly. He promised to report what I had said to Signor Grandi, but he suggested that, in view of the political changes now taking place in Italy, I should instruct His Majesty's Ambassador at Rome to make a similar communication to the Italian Government.

4. I thanked Signor Scialoja and reminded him of my offer to do anything which either the Italian or the French Government felt I could do by way of helping them to reach a satisfactory settlement.

I am, &c.

ARTHUR HENDERSON

<sup>1</sup> Also to His Majesty's representative at Paris (No. 2026), *mutatis mutandis*.

<sup>2</sup> No. 235.

*Sir R. Graham to Mr. A. Henderson (Received October 7)*

*No. 724 [A 6458/1/45]*

Sir,

ROME, October 1, 1930

When I saw the Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday, on my return from leave, our conversation turned at once to the Franco-Italian naval negotiations and their breakdown. Signor Grandi showed himself acutely pessimistic on the subject. He said that the Rosso proposal was the last word in Italian concession. It had indeed aroused much indignation in Italian naval circles, and the Minister of Marine, Admiral Sirianni, had been to Signor Mussolini to protest against it; nevertheless, it had been approved. The manner in which this proposal had at first been received by the French had been extremely encouraging. The French Ambassador had called at the Palazzo Chigi and had suggested that the way now lay open for an early resumption of the African conversations. When therefore the Italian proposal was not only turned down, but was met with a new French proposal on entirely different lines, the blow was all the more severe. Signor Grandi's reading of the French attitude was that they had no desire or intention whatever of coming to terms on either the naval or the African question. The eventual outcome must be an Italo-German *rapprochement*, although at the present moment neither of the parties concerned desired anything of the kind. His Excellency seemed to give a hint, though it was not more than a hint, that his own position as Foreign Minister was so deeply involved in the success of the Franco-Italian negotiation, that in the event of its failure he would relinquish his post.

2. Signor Grandi said that he greatly regretted the erroneous interpretation which had been placed upon his own departure from Geneva. Had he foreseen it he would have remained there. He seemed especially to resent the line taken by the 'Daily Herald' in the matter and complained that that newspaper should have had as its representative at Geneva a well-known 'Fuoruscito' and ex-private secretary of Count Sforza. He said that his departure had had two main purposes in view: one was (as stated by Signor Chigi to Mr. Osborne and reported in the latter's despatch No. 709<sup>1</sup> of the 26th ultimo) that he did not wish to address the Assembly and thereby possibly complicate the difficult task of the naval negotiators. Secondly, that he desired to reinforce the position of Senator Scialoja, who was not viewed with much sympathy in Fascist circles and to whom the rôle of second fiddle was somewhat irksome.

3. Signor Grandi said that he had of course been only too ready to meet M. Briand's request that the negotiations should be considered as only suspended and that all doors should be left open. But, he repeated, he could only view the outlook with pessimism. In reply to a remark on my part he added that the Italian Government fully realised the great importance to

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. This despatch reported a conversation with Signor Chigi, *Chef de Cabinet* at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on September 23.

His Majesty's Government of securing an agreement and they themselves were only too desirous that that agreement should be based on the lowest figures possible.

4. This morning I saw the French Ambassador, who declared that he had been kept in ignorance of the naval conversations and was unable to say why the breakdown had occurred. He asked me whether I had heard a persistent report that Signor Grandi was about to resign his post as Minister for Foreign Affairs and to accept an Embassy abroad, and that the Department in question was to be resumed by Signor Mussolini himself, with either Signor De Martino or Signor Bordonaro, according to the post accepted by Signor Grandi, as Secretary-General. I said that such rumours had reached me and that I greatly regretted them, a regret which my French colleague heartily re-echoed. M. de Beaumarchais told me, in strict confidence, that the French had made a proposal to the Italians to the following effect. That naval parity between France and Italy in the Mediterranean should be accepted, but that, at the same time, Italy should recognise the additional requirements of France for the protection of her extra-Mediterranean coasts and her communications with Cochin-China, and other far-lying dependencies. But it should be laid down that the additional French naval forces should not be allowed to enter the Mediterranean except with the approval of the League of Nations. The Italian Government had, however, felt unable to accept such a proposal.

5. Signor Grandi told me, and M. de Beaumarchais confirmed to me, that no further conversations had taken place on the African question. Signor Grandi evidently thought that a naval agreement should first be arrived at. My French colleague, on the other hand, seemed to consider that the two negotiations might run concurrently.

6. In the meantime, there appears to be some revival here of the bitter feeling against France, although the press truce continues. But the Italian newspapers reproduce with relish hostile comments on French policy extracted from the 'Manchester Guardian' and other English press organs which write in a similar sense.

I have, &c.

R. GRAHAM

#### No. 238

*Sir R. Lindsay (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received October 16)*  
*No. 343 Telegraphic [A 6708/1/45]*

WASHINGTON, October 15, 1930

Mr. Marriner and Mr. Hugh Gibson have just called at Embassy to make the following urgent proposal:—

Franco-Italian Naval conversations seemed to be dead. They feared what might be the effect in Preparatory Commission of Disarmament if the deadlock still persisted when it met on November 6. They had to-day received

from Paris urgent and pretty reliable information that French Government, who it appeared had secured conditional support of the Left, intended imminently to announce building programme of 3 battleships and another 10,000 ton cruiser which would make agreement with Italy still more difficult and from which, once announced, it would be difficult to recede. United States Secretary of State considered it urgent to (? bring)<sup>1</sup> pressure to bear on French and Italians before this should happen. He proposed that the United States Government, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Japanese Government should simultaneously and on similar lines make *démarche vis-à-vis* French and Italian Governments using every possible channel. He thought it most important for obvious reasons that Japan should join His Majesty's Government and United States Government and he was this afternoon speaking with Japanese Ambassador.

Mr. Marriner and Mr. Gibson ventured to think that if you fell in with proposal it would be advisable to see Japanese Ambassador first and urge him to use all his influence with his Government to persuade them to participate in contemplated action. Mr. Stimson was to speak frankly but friendly to the French Ambassador and Italian Ambassador on October 16 separately but informing each that he was also speaking with the other.

His proposal is that the three Naval Powers should try to persuade French and Italian Governments to break the present deadlock by each making a unilateral declaration that its programme during the lifetime of the treaty would not exceed a level 'X' and 'Y' respectively the respective levels to be worked out first behind the scenes and of course with reference to levels accepted by Great Britain etc. in the treaty. These declarations would be made by each, ostensibly without reference to the other, without prejudice to questions at issue between them of parity or superiority, solution of which they would in effect defer till the end of the treaty in 1936.

The line United States Government proposed to take with French was that they quite understood their misgivings and wish for security in view of recent happenings in Germany. They doubted however that a present augmentation of fleet would in any way increase security of France but thought it would if anything decrease it, since not only might she cause Great Britain, United States and Japan to augment their navies correspondingly and thereby annoy these countries, but she would also evoke resentment in Italy and Germany and other countries anxious for decrease of armaments. The French difficulty could surely be obviated by suggested unilateral declaration without sacrifice of their principle of superiority over Italy.

With Italy emphasis would be laid on desirability for mitigating bad feeling which would arise on all sides if present insistence on parity should cause increase of armaments instead of decrease which Italy as much as any country desired. They were not being asked to give up principle of parity but only to defer settlement of question for duration of London treaty.

<sup>1</sup> The text here is uncertain.

United States Government's proposal constituted attempt to furnish France and Italy with a face saving device. Each Government could point out that declaration was made independently of action of the other, that it did not bind it irrevocably, nor constitute an engagement *vis-à-vis* the other.

Mr. Marriner and Mr. Gibson after emphasising importance of element of time added that ceremony of deposit of ratifications of London treaty by the United States, Great Britain and Japan would offer occasion to Mr. Hoover, the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister of Japan to refer to the importance of agreement between France and Italy at reasonable levels. Secretary of State hoped very earnestly that His Majesty's Government would fall in with suggestions for joint exerted pressure. He thought that no harm could be done whereas if no action were taken and failure of France and Italy to agree produced general increase in naval construction the world would probably ask why no vigorous attempt had been made by the three naval Powers to prevent this misfortune.

If you agree to above proposed action Mr. Gibson on his way to Geneva would visit Paris and probably Rome to say a kind word from him [*sic*] and he thought it would be well if His Majesty's Government and Japanese Government caused similar invitation [*sic*] to be taken on their behalf since it was important that the whole *démarche* should have joint character and avoid too American or Anglo-Saxon a colour. Moreover United States Government wished to avoid any possible appearance of mediation on their part.

Mr. Gibson sails on the *Leviathan* on October 18 and would be very glad if expression of your views could reach United States Government before his departure.

## No. 239

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir R. Lindsay (Washington)*

*No. 520 Telegraphic [A 6708/1/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 17, 1930*

Your telegram No. 343.<sup>1</sup>

Please inform the Secretary of State that His Majesty's Government fully share the concern of the United States Government at the present situation and are giving careful consideration to the proposals made to you through Mr. Marriner and Mr. Hugh Gibson. As they are in full agreement with Mr. Stimson's view as to the dangers inherent in what might be construed as 'Anglo-Saxon pressure', they are consulting the Japanese Government before taking further action. This will, I am afraid, make it impossible to return a definite reply to your telegram before Mr. Gibson sails, but no doubt arrangements can be made for the information to reach him immediately he lands in Europe.

<sup>1</sup> No. 238.

## No. 240

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir J. Tilley (Tokyo) and Sir R. Graham (Rome)*  
*No. 125<sup>1</sup> Telegraphic [A 6708/1/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 18, 1930*

United States Government, being concerned at the present Franco-Italian deadlock on the naval question and having received fairly reliable information that the French Government intend shortly to announce building programme of three battleships and an additional 10,000 ton cruiser, have suggested that His Majesty's Government, the Japanese Government and they themselves should simultaneously and on similar lines make a *démarche* at Paris and Rome. Proposal of the United States Government is that the three naval Powers should try to persuade the French and Italian Governments to break the present deadlock by each making a unilateral declaration that its programme during the lifetime of the treaty would not exceed a level X and Y respectively, the levels to be worked out with reference to levels accepted by Great Britain, etc., in the treaty. These declarations would be made by each Government, ostensibly without reference to the other and without prejudice to questions at issue between them of parity or superiority.

United States Secretary of State spoke in this sense to the French and Italian Ambassadors at Washington separately on the 16th instant and has expressed to His Majesty's Ambassador at Washington his earnest hope that His Majesty's Government would fall in with the suggestion for the exertion of joint pressure.

I have enquired of His Majesty's Ambassador at Paris whether he can confirm the reported intention of the French Government to make these increases in their building programme. I have also seen the Japanese Ambassador here, who tells me that he has received full information in regard to American proposals and is awaiting further instructions from his Government. I informed the Japanese Ambassador of the enquiry I am making at Paris and will see him again when I have received a reply.

<sup>1</sup> To Tokyo; No. 119 to Rome.

## No. 241

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir R. Lindsay (Washington)*  
*No. 528 Telegraphic [A 6784/1/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 22, 1930*

My telegram No. 520<sup>1</sup> (of October 17: Naval Disarmament negotiations).

We have been giving very careful and sympathetic consideration to Mr. Stimson's proposal for concerted action at Paris and Rome and in the meantime have been endeavouring to ascertain how far the reports which have reached the United States Government in regard to French proposals for

<sup>1</sup> No. 239.



capital ship and cruiser construction should be regarded as accurate. His Majesty's Ambassador at Paris reports that though the 1931-32 naval programme is under consideration by the technical services of the Ministry of Marine, nothing definite has yet been submitted to the Minister of Marine and the French Government have as yet no knowledge of the proposals, whatever they may eventually be. There is thus no confirmation either from Paris or Tokyo of any decision by the French Government to embark on the additional construction mentioned in your telegram No. 343<sup>1</sup> (of October 16).

It is also possible, that the United States Government are not in possession of the latest information to reach us in regard to the Franco-Italian situation. In the first place it would we think be wrong to regard the Franco-Italian naval conversations as dead. Before I left Geneva I received assurances from both M. Briand and Signor Scialoja that the conversations which had now come to an end between the experts would be continued by the Ministers. Furthermore, we are informed that in the view of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs progress in the Disarmament Commission in November should not be greatly affected by the Franco-Italian difficulty and that it would be comparatively easy to bring the work of the Commission to a successful conclusion. Lord Tyrrell reports that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are already considering the procedure after the completion of the Preparatory Commission's task and they contemplate the appointment by the Council of the League of an organising committee to sound the various Powers as to their attitude. In the circumstances we fear that anything in the nature of joint representations at the present moment might do more harm than good though we greatly appreciate the initiative of Mr. Stimson in holding to the French and Italian Ambassadors the language reported in your telegram.

<sup>1</sup> No. 238.

## No. 242

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir R. Graham (Rome)*

*No. 122 Telegraphic [A 6784/1/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 23, 1930*

My telegram No. 119<sup>1</sup> (of October 18: United States proposal for joint *démarche* at Paris and Rome with regard to naval question).

His Majesty's Government have come to the conclusion that anything in the nature of joint representations at the present moment might do more harm than good. In arriving at this decision His Majesty's Government have been influenced by the fact that it has proved impossible to obtain confirmation either from Paris or Tokyo of the report that the French Government have decided to embark on the additional construction mentioned in my telegram under reference. It is true that the 1931/32 naval

<sup>1</sup> No. 240.

programme is stated to be under consideration by the Ministry of Marine, but nothing definite has yet been submitted to the Minister, while the French Government have, I am informed, no knowledge as yet of the proposals whatever they may eventually be.

Above is for your own information only.

#### No. 243

*Mr. A. Henderson to Mr. Snow (Tokyo)*

*No. 128 Telegraphic [A 6784/1/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 23, 1930*

My telegram No. 125<sup>1</sup> (of October 18: United States proposal for joint *démarche* at Paris and Rome with regard to naval question).

Japanese Ambassador informed me on October 22 that his colleague in Paris had been instructed to approach M. Briand with a view to ascertaining the facts as to the reported construction programme mentioned in my telegram under reference. At the same time the Japanese Ambassador in Paris would express the hope for the successful issue of the Franco-Italian negotiations, in view of the deplorable effect of their failure on the work of the Preparatory Commission and the possibility that if no settlement could be achieved it would result in Article 21 of the London Naval Treaty being brought into operation.

In the absence of any confirmation of the report that the French Government have decided upon the naval construction above mentioned, His Majesty's Government have reached the conclusion that joint representations as proposed by the Government of the United States might at this juncture do more harm than good. It is also possible that the United States Government are not aware of the assurances which I received before leaving Geneva that while the Franco-Italian conversations between experts were at an end they would be continued between Ministers.

Japanese Ambassador here has been informed in the above sense.

<sup>1</sup> No. 240.

#### No. 244

*Sir R. Lindsay (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received October 24)*

*No. 360 Telegraphic [A 6893/1/45]*

WASHINGTON, *October 23, 1930*

Your telegram No. 520.<sup>1</sup>

Head of Western European Division telephoned this morning to say that word had been received from Tokyo to the effect that Japanese Ambassadors at Paris and Rome had been instructed to speak to Government to which

<sup>1</sup> No. 239.

they are accredited in the same sense in which Mr. Stimson had spoken to the French and Italian Ambassadors here on October 16. (Secretary of State told me this morning he had spoken to the Ambassadors very firmly.)

Mr. Marriner said he hoped His Majesty's Government would very soon find themselves able to fall in with the United States Government's proposals. It was very desirable that *démarche* should be made before the ceremony accompanying deposit of ratifications of the London Treaty on October 27 and delivery of broadcast speeches by the Prime Minister, Japanese Prime Minister and the President. United States Government were particularly anxious as he had already said, to avoid appearance of mediating and still more of giving the appearance of acting without our support.

Since above was drafted I have received your telegram No. 528<sup>1</sup> and have communicated its contents to State Department.

<sup>1</sup> No. 241.

### No. 245

*Note by Mr. Craigie*

[A 6937/1/45]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 24, 1930*

The Counsellor of the American Embassy called to see me at 1.20 and said that he wished to read me confidentially a telegram just received from Washington. The Embassy had tried to obtain an appointment for General Dawes with the Secretary of State but, on learning that the Secretary of State was away, the Ambassador had asked to see the Prime Minister.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Atherton only read the telegram over to me but to the best of my recollection it ran as follows:

After repeating the gist of our telegram to Washington No. 528 Mr. Stimson points out that his suggestion had not been for joint representations at Paris and Rome. The United States Government had on its own addressed representations to the French and Italian Governments and had hoped that His Majesty's Government, on their own initiative, would express their view in order to prevent any subsequent modification of the levels of naval strength incorporated in the London Treaty. The telegram continued 'Our conferences with both the French and Italian Ambassadors strengthen our belief that the hope of saving the Franco-Italian negotiations lies in the influence of outside and clearly expressed opinion'. The United States Government accordingly much regretted that they could not share the optimism expressed in the Secretary of State's telegram and the President and Mr. Stimson were greatly disappointed to find that the two Governments did not see eye to eye in this matter.

R. L. CRAIGIE

<sup>1</sup> General Dawes gave to the Prime Minister on October 24 the text of Mr. Stimson's telegram summarised here. The telegram is printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1930, vol. i, pp. 145-6.

*Sir R. Lindsay (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received October 25)*  
*No. 362 Telegraphic [A 6915/1/45]*

WASHINGTON, October 24, 1930

Your telegram No. 528.<sup>1</sup>

Secretary of State sent for me this morning. He said that in naval disarmament aims and interests of His Majesty's Government and United States Government were identical and as difference of opinion could only arise as to methods of pursuing them he could express quite frankly his disappointment at your reply to his proposals. He was not at all impressed by reasons which made you hesitate to act. He did not believe French Ministry of Marine would ever exercise any restraining influence on naval building and the fact that it had as yet officially formulated no programme meant nothing. Prospect of an organising committee to follow on after Preparatory Commission seemed to him merely a method of spinning out indefinitely discussions of procedure and to offer little prospect of solid achievement. As to Franco-Italian ministerial talk he had received an Italian answer to his representations but French answer had not yet come. Unless an answer . . .<sup>2</sup> when Ministers parted at Geneva M. Briand had given Signor Grandi to understand that as soon as he returned to Paris he would consult his colleagues and would communicate with Italian Government as to continuation of conversations. Since then Rome had had no word from Paris. Secretary of State said that his own view which was strongly held by the President was that at present French Government was definitely in the wrong. He believed it would be possible to induce the Italian Government to depart from its demand for unequivocal parity but realized the stumbling block at present was the French Naval Law and contemplation by the French Government of extended programme. It was this that made a recourse to article 21 of the London Naval Treaty a serious possibility and constituted a menace to the cause of disarmament.

I concurred as to identical Anglo-American aims and interests and said that only divergence between us was that in your opinion any sort of joint action now at Paris was likely to do more harm than good. Secretary of State replied that he was not wedded to any particular form of procedure. He (? minded)<sup>2</sup> so little question of identity or simultaneity that he had himself gone ahead and made his representations to the French and Italian Ambassadors. What he felt strongly was that the moment had come when some action was necessary and when inaction was dangerous and he urged that His Majesty's Government should speedily take some steps in support of United States Government's representation in whatever form seemed best to them.

<sup>1</sup> No. 241.

<sup>2</sup> The text here is uncertain.

No. 247

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received October 25)*  
*No. 174 Telegraphic [A 6921/1/45]*

ROME, October 24, 1930

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

Towards the conclusion of a desultory conversation which did not seem to lead anywhere on Franco-Italian Naval conversations I appealed to Minister for Foreign Affairs asking whether he could not put forward some useful personal suggestion or idea. Minister for Foreign Affairs replied speaking not as Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs but as a friend that there was only one suggestion he could make and he did so with all reserve. It was that in the event of France and Italy being unable to agree as seemed only too probable he thought that if three other Powers concerned addressed request to France and Italy to continue their naval holiday for six months or a year or even longer Italy could not refuse to comply. It was true that Signor Mussolini had disliked naval holiday and it was opposed by certain fascist elements. At the same time Minister for Foreign Affairs believed that if suggestion of its prolongation were laid before him in the proper light and strongly advocated as it would be by himself Signor Mussolini would accept.

Minister for Foreign Affairs emphasized that if this idea were followed it must on no account be attributed to him.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. In this telegram Sir R. Graham reported that, in his conversation, Signor Grandi had said that 'he did not see what more Italy could do' and that the Italian Government had not heard whether M. Briand had carried out his promise to submit the naval question to the French Cabinet on October 3.

No. 248

*Mr. A. Henderson to Lord Tyrrell (Paris) and Sir R. Graham (Rome)*  
*Nos. 118, 119, 200<sup>1</sup> Telegraphic [A 6937/1/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, October 25, 1930

My telegram No. 528 to Sir R. Lindsay.<sup>2</sup>

My telegram No. 122.<sup>3</sup>

United States Government have expressed their keen disappointment at reluctance of His Majesty's Government to make the proposed representations on the naval question and have reasserted their apprehension in regard to the imminent announcement of a large French building programme for 1931. We hesitated to act as suggested by the United States Government because of your telegrams Nos. 173 and 174<sup>4</sup> but we have now decided in

<sup>1</sup> To Paris; Nos. 125, 126, 127 to Rome.

<sup>2</sup> No. 241.

<sup>3</sup> No. 242.

<sup>4</sup> i.e. telegrams 173-4 from Paris. In telegram 173 of October 20 Lord Tyrrell reported that no decision had been taken about the French 1931-2 programme and that, for technical as well as financial reasons, it was most unlikely that three battleships would be laid down in any one year. In telegram 174 of the same date Lord Tyrrell reported that the French Government considered the chances of progress in the naval negotiations to be small.

view of the American attitude to authorise Your Excellency to make the following oral communication to the French/Italian Government.

His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have been much concerned at the rumours which continue to reach them in regard to a Franco-Italian deadlock on the naval question. Assurances were given to Mr. Henderson at Geneva that the conversations which had been suspended would be continued, but up to the present nothing in this direction appears to have occurred. His Majesty's Government earnestly hope that the negotiations which at one time seemed to be progressing favourably may be resumed in some form at the earliest possible moment. The Prime Minister as Chairman of the Naval Conference offered his good offices when the Conference adjourned and Mr. Henderson made the same offer to M. Briand and Signor Grandi in May last. The good offices of His Majesty's Government, as a party closely concerned in every phase of this question, remain open to the two Governments should they desire to make use of them.

According to a telegram received from His Majesty's Ambassador at Washington dated the 23rd instant the State Department consider it very desirable that the *démarche* should be made before the deposit of ratifications of the London Treaty on October 27 and the delivery of broadcast speeches on the same day. It is important that we should comply with the wish expressed by the United States Government on the question of date.

I would remind you that representations were made by the American Secretary of State to the French and Italian Ambassadors at Washington on the 16th instant and that the Japanese Chargé d'Affaires at Rome and presumably also his colleague at Paris have already acted.

A similar telegram has been addressed to His Majesty's Ambassador at Rome/Paris.

Repeated to Washington Nos. 541, 542 and 543.

## No. 249

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir R. Lindsay (Washington)*

*No. 544 Telegraphic [A 6937/1/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 25, 1930*

My telegram No. 118<sup>1</sup> to Paris. (Proposed representations to French and Italian Governments.)

You should inform Mr. Stimson at once that, in view of his urgent representations that we should take action similar to that which has been taken at Paris and Rome by United States and Japanese Governments, I have addressed to Lord Tyrrell the instructions contained in my telegram under reference. Similar instructions have been sent to His Majesty's Ambassador at Rome.

<sup>1</sup> No. 248.

## No. 250

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received October 28)*  
*No. 177 Telegraphic [A 6985/1/45]*

ROME, October 27, 1930

My telegram No. 176.<sup>1</sup>

Minister for Foreign Affairs returned to Rome late today and I saw him this afternoon. His Excellency said that Italian Government appreciated the tone and spirit of our communication, and were glad that it had been made as it could only be helpful . . . <sup>2</sup> disarmament was that previously described to me (see my telegram No. 173).<sup>3</sup> M. Briand had left Geneva asking that door should be left open until he could consult French Cabinet on October 3. Since then Italian Government had not heard a word. Minister for Foreign Affairs had thought it might be undignified or indiscreet to press him. But in view of our representation Minister for Foreign Affairs felt justified in instructing Italian Ambassador at Paris to approach M. Briand with a view to ascertaining if there were any new avenues to be explored and he would do this at once.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. In this telegram of October 26 Sir R. Graham reported Signor Grandi's absence from Rome.

<sup>2</sup> The text here is uncertain.

<sup>3</sup> See No. 247, note 1.

## No. 251

*Lord Tyrrell (Paris) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received October 29)*  
*No. 179 Telegraphic: By Bag [A 7006/1/45]*

PARIS, October 28, 1930

My telegram No. 178.<sup>1</sup>

M. Massigli who came to see me this morning on M. Briand's instructions, informed me that the latter was not yet in a position to reply to the offer of the good offices of His Majesty's Government in the Franco-Italian Naval negotiations made as reported in my telegram No. 178. I understood that the reply would, if possible, be discussed by MM. Briand and Tardieu in the course of the day.

2. I took the opportunity to draw M. Massigli's attention to the statement made by Signor Grandi to Sir R. Graham (see Rome telegram No. 173) that after the failure of the Rosso-Massigli conversations M. Briand had promised to lay the whole question before the French Cabinet and that nothing further had been heard by the Italian Government. M. Massigli said that the fact that the Italians were making this statement, which is in itself true, had last night been brought for the first time to the French Government's notice by a telegram from the French Ambassador at Washing-

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. In this telegram Lord Tyrrell reported a preliminary reply from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the absence of M. Briand.

ton. The French Ambassador at Rome had immediately been instructed to inform Signor Grandi of the surprise with which the French Government had learned of this statement. It was true that when they parted at Geneva on October 1, M. Briand had indicated to Signor Grandi that the two Governments would remain in contact and that on his return to Paris he would consult the French Cabinet as to what further steps could usefully be taken by him. Unfortunately M. Briand had fallen ill on his arrival in Paris on October 2. He had not been able to attend the Cabinet on October 3 and was still confined to his room when on October 9 appeared the declaration of the Grand Fascist Council insisting upon the recognition of the principle of parity as the condition of any agreement.<sup>1</sup> This resolution, M. Massigli said, had barred the way to any further advances by the French Government more especially as they had learned through private channels that M. Mussolini intended to insist on the letter of the resolution.

<sup>1</sup> On October 8, after hearing a statement by Signor Grandi, the Grand Council of the Fascist Party approved of an Order of the day confirming the decision that Italy could not accept any naval agreement not based on the principle of parity.

## No. 252

*Lord Tyrrell (Paris) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received October 29)*  
(Unnumbered) *Telegraphic: By Bag [A 7006/1/45]*

PARIS, October 28, 1930

My telegram No. 179.<sup>1</sup>

2. I learn from Mr. Gibson that views expressed to Sir R. Lindsay by United States Secretary of State (see Washington telegram No. 362)<sup>2</sup> respecting French responsibility for present deadlock in Franco-Italian naval negotiations were due to a misunderstanding caused by the vague language held to Secretary of State by the French Ambassador in Washington. Similar views had apparently been telegraphed by State Department to United States Embassy here. Mr. Gibson says that he has now put this matter right in his conversation yesterday with the President of the Council.

3. Mr. Gibson also tells me that M. Tardieu is perfectly agreeable to the proposal contained in paragraph 4 of Washington telegram No. 343,<sup>3</sup> provided Italy renounces during duration of naval treaty her demand for parity. In these circumstances Mr. Gibson is leaving for Rome today with M. Tardieu's blessing.

4. This understanding is only known here to Tardieu, Berthelot and Massigli. The two latter were to be informed of it by Gibson on the suggestion of Tardieu.

5. I mention this in order to show the importance Gibson and Tardieu attach to secrecy for fear of any premature leakage which would spoil the market at Rome.

<sup>1</sup> No. 251.

<sup>2</sup> No. 246.

<sup>3</sup> No. 238.



No. 253

*Letter from Lord Tyrrell to Sir R. Vansittart*

[A 7012/1/45]

PARIS, October 28, 1930

About a fortnight ago Berthelot took an opportunity of my calling upon him to say that he did not see much prospect of any headway in the Franco-Italian conversations about naval reductions, and that he was awaiting the return of Massigli in order to discuss with him the possibility of coming to an arrangement with us that would relieve us of having to build against the French and might also make it easier for the Italians to join up when they realised the possibility of an Anglo-French agreement. It would incidentally enable them to bury the parity demand.

2. Massigli came to see me about other things this morning and told me that Berthelot had suggested to him that he should discuss this idea with me on his return from leave.

3. He thinks that we should have no difficulty in coming to an understanding with regard to big and small cruisers, but that the obstacle is submarines. He says that in the opinion of the technical experts here the value of submarines is very much exaggerated, as they think that in time to come their value will decrease, and he does not anticipate any serious opposition from experts. The opposition unfortunately comes from the Minister of Marine who, in his ignorance of the weapon, exaggerates its importance. He has therefore identified himself with an extravagant plan and has unfortunately persuaded the Naval Commission of the Senate to back him.

4. Massigli thinks that if we could hammer out a submarine agreement with the help of our Admiralty the Ministers here (by that I suppose he means Tardieu and Briand) would be able to defeat Dumesnil.

5. I promised Massigli to let you know his views in case you see any possibility of our Admiralty being able to foreshadow concessions that would enable Massigli here to work out an agreement.

TYRRELL

No. 254

*Lord Tyrrell (Paris) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received October 29)*

*No. 180 Telegraphic [A 7030/1/45]*

PARIS, October 29, 1930

My telegram No. 178.<sup>1</sup>

M. Briand this morning expressed to me his thanks for your offer of your good offices which will always be welcome here. French Government are quite willing to resume naval conversation *à deux* or *à trois* on practical questions provided demand for parity is eliminated for the time being as its inclusion would only lead to barren argument. French Government do not

<sup>1</sup> See p. 414, No. 251, note 1.

thereby intend to ask the Italians to forego their claim but to leave it in abeyance for the time being in order to enable us to arrive at a practical agreement.

No. 255

*Letter from Lord Tyrrell to Sir R. Vansittart*  
[A 7215/1/45]

PARIS, October 30, 1930

Loucheur came to see me yesterday in order to tell me how anxious he was that we should make a serious effort to come to a naval agreement with the French which would eventually lead to Italy becoming a party to it and thus putting an end to the present deadlock.

2. I have ascertained that he is in the confidence of the Ministers here and quite ready, with their approval, to promote such an agreement by making propaganda for it with Dumesnil, the present Minister of Marine, and the Chamber and Senate Commissions of the Navy.

3. As you know, though he is not a member of the Ministry he is head of a parliamentary group that holds the balance between the Right and the Left on which the present Ministry depend for their political existence.

4. He gave me to understand that before coming to see me he had seen both Briand and Poincaré, who were strongly in favour of coming to an understanding with us on naval matters, and that Tardieu was in agreement with both Briand and Poincaré.

5. Loucheur repeated to me what Massigli said to me on the 28th, which I reported to you in my letter of the same day, that he thought we could come to an agreement with regard to big and small cruisers and that the only outstanding difficulty related to submarines, and he expressed the earnest hope that concessions might be made under that head by our Admiralty which would enable him to make a successful propaganda in April here for the conclusion of an agreement. He felt convinced that with a little help from us it would overcome the opposition of Dumesnil and the parliamentary commissions.

6. One of the reasons which I think is prompting this move is a realisation here of the fact that in spite of the efforts France has made to defend herself by armaments she has failed to obtain the security which she desires. Any further reference [*sic*] on her part such as the extension of the military service from one year to eighteen months and further expenditure on armaments and fortifications would be most unpopular in the country and would be playing straight into the hands of the Socialist party, who would be enabled to secure the peasant vote which would enable them to obtain a majority at the next general election.

7. I mention this point in order to show you that I think the people here are sincere in their endeavour to come to an arrangement with us with regard to naval reductions.

TYRRELL

No. 256

*Lord Tyrrell (Paris) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received November 1)*  
*No. 183 Telegraphic: By Bag [A 7115/1/45]*

PARIS, October 31, 1930

The American Chargé d'Affaires came to see me this afternoon and read out to me a telegram which he had received last night from Mr. Gibson giving an account of his conversation with Grandi on Thursday afternoon.

2. Gibson sketched out his proposal to Grandi which amounted to asking the Italian Government to resume their conversations with the French by allowing the question of parity to remain in abeyance.

3. Grandi listened to the proposal but expressed no opinion and said he must submit it to Mussolini.

4. He then proceeded to tell Gibson that the French Ambassador had been to see him on instructions from Paris to explain why Monsieur Briand had made no further proposals as he had undertaken to do at Geneva (see my telegram No. 179)<sup>1</sup> and to suggest that the conversations should be resumed. Grandi explained that the resolution passed by the Grand Fascist Council was merely a repetition of the attitude taken up by Italy and need be no bar to a resumption of negotiations.

5. The French Ambassador failed to elicit any explanation from Grandi as to whether this Council resolution bound the Italian Government or not. He then proposed that Rosso should be allowed to come back to Paris to resume conversations here but Grandi replied that he could not allow him to do so but that the Italian experts including Rosso would be at Geneva for the meeting of the Preparatory Commission, where conversations might be resumed. The French Ambassador pointed out that time was the essence of the matter as it was most important that negotiations should be resumed before the meeting of the Preparatory Commission, but he failed to shake Grandi.

6. Gibson is to see Mussolini either tomorrow or on Sunday in order to get from him an answer to the American suggestion.

7. The American Chargé d'Affaires has promised to keep me informed of any further negotiations. He deplored very much a leakage which has taken place at Washington with regard to Gibson's mission to Paris and Rome.

<sup>1</sup> No. 251.

No. 257

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received November 1)*  
*Nos. 180 and 181 Telegraphic [A 7129/1/45]*

ROME, November 1, 1930

My telegram No. 179.<sup>1</sup>

Minister for Foreign Affairs tells me he replied to French Ambassador that Grand Council's resolution of October 8 did not affect the situation

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. In this telegram of October 29 Sir R. Graham reported that the French Ambassador had been instructed to inform Signor Grandi that the position had been 'radically affected' by the resolution of the Grand Council, but that the French Government remained ready to consider any practical proposals for a solution.

at all. It was nothing more than a reaffirmation of principle already repeatedly declared. Moreover Grand Council had approved Rosso proposals in spite of Admiralty opposition. French Ambassador said he would report to Paris accordingly. He had also expressed surprise of French Government as recorded in paragraph two of Paris telegram No. 179<sup>1</sup> and had asked why M. Briand had not been reminded of his promise. Signor Grandi had replied that it would obviously have been indiscreet to press him for an answer.

Mr. Gibson came to see me yesterday morning after conversations with Signors Grandi and Rosso. He informed me of proposals he is making which are already known to you saying M. Tardieu had, after at first demurring, in the end appeared to favour them. He had explained them to Signor Grandi who had been completely non-committal. Mr. Gibson was to meet Signor Mussolini last night but did not propose to enter into details of disarmament unless encouraged to do so which seemed unlikely.

Signor Grandi asked to see me in the evening and appeared very unfavourably impressed with Mr. Gibson's proposals. He said they were simply a re-hash of proposals repeatedly put forward in London since . . .<sup>2</sup> they might suit the French but would place Italy in a very embarrassing position and might even compel her to ask to build more than France. He was at a loss how to lay them before Signor Mussolini without provoking his annoyance and had not yet done so. Nor did Signor Grandi like Mr. Gibson's idea of encouraging France to concentrate on building capital ships under her Washington rights.

While we were talking French Ambassador called to make urgent communication and I gave up my place to him seeing Signor Grandi again later. French Ambassador had come to say that French were willing to continue conversations on condition question of parity was 'excluded'. Signor Grandi suggested there should be no mention either of 'exclusion' or 'admission' of parity but that conversations should just continue. French Ambassador asked that Signor Rosso's proposals should be modified; Signor Grandi replied he feared this would be impossible as they were the last word in Italian concessions. Signor Grandi was unwilling to send Italian experts again to Paris but was willing to despatch them at once to meet the French experts at Geneva. It was arranged that conversations should be continued at Geneva.

I saw French Ambassador as well as Signor Grandi after their interview and must say they both appeared extremely pessimistic.

<sup>1</sup> No. 251.

<sup>2</sup> The text here is uncertain.

## No. 258

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received November 1)*

*No. 182 Telegraphic [A 7130/1/45]*

ROME, November 1, 1930

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Gibson tells me he had very friendly conversation with Signor Mussolini during which general question of disarmament was discussed but no

<sup>1</sup> No. 257.

allusion whatever was made to Franco-Italian conversations. Mr. Gibson feels that he has to some extent failed with Signor Grandi but thinks he has been more successful with Signor Rosso and hopes that the latter will persuade the Italian Government to consider his proposals.

No. 259

*Sir R. Lindsay (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received November 4)*  
*No. 370 Telegraphic [A 7188/1/45]*

WASHINGTON, November 3, 1930

Your telegram No. 544.<sup>1</sup>

Secretary of State summoned Counsellor this morning to speak on Franco-Italian naval question. Mr. Stimson was anxious for you and the Prime Minister to know of progress of Mr. Gibson's mission in Paris and Rome.

Mr. Gibson had met with unexpected success in Paris. M. Tardieu, who had not apparently got a clear idea from French Ambassador here of the precise nature of proposal reported in my telegram No. 343,<sup>2</sup> was at first cold but after Mr. Gibson's explanation he had shown considerable interest. He expressed impatience over fact that naval difficulties with Italy had been allowed to assume as between the two nations an importance out of proportion to its intrinsic importance and gave impression of real desire to remove it. He saw the virtue of the United States proposal as means of turning difficulty. He was however doubtful whether Chamber would accept any agreement with Italy as to figures (and proposal involved this) which did not specifically reject parity.

Mr. Gibson was not making headway in Rome and (though he was not quite certain on this point as yet) did not expect that the Italian Foreign Office would accept proposal. Mr. Stimson thought that Signor Grandi feared to take any definite decision and Mr. Marriner who was also present at interview doubted whether matter had ever been referred to Signor Mussolini.

In these circumstances and in view of encouraging attitude of M. Tardieu, telegram was being sent to Mr. Gibson today authorising him to re-visit Paris on the way to Geneva and to make new proposal to the French Government to the effect that France should agree on fleet figures acceptable to Great Britain and adhere to part III of London Naval Treaty (including of course Article 21). Mr. Stimson and Mr. Marriner understood that French figures had already been reduced to a point nearer the requirements of His Majesty's Government. They also thought (? that)<sup>3</sup> this proposal should have chance of approval of French Chamber. Mr. Campbell said he thought he had seen in the press reports from Europe suggesting that France might consider and indeed was considering such action and that he had not seen any unfavourable reactions reported. Mr. (? Stimson)<sup>3</sup> said 'New York Times' this morning had indeed published message from their Geneva correspondent on these lines but he had not seen it or any other such reports when

<sup>1</sup> No. 249.

<sup>2</sup> No. 238.

<sup>3</sup> The text here is uncertain.

deciding on instructions to Mr. Gibson. (Rush press here has published prominently since October 31st various messages quoting suggestions in this sense by 'Oeuvre' and 'Echo de Paris' and a general French feeling favourable to the idea.)

Mr. Stimson added that wide discretion had been given to Mr. Gibson as the man on the spot as to whether he should make new proposal in question in Paris or at Geneva or in fact whether he should make it at all. But Secretary of State was anxious for His Majesty's Government as soon as possible to have information regarding Mr. Gibson's progress and to know nature of fresh action he had been authorised to take in order to avoid possibility of any 'crossing of wires' and in the hope that they would instruct His Majesty's Ambassador in Paris to take any action possible in support.

Mr. Campbell asked what in the opinion of Secretary of State would be the effect (? on)<sup>1</sup> Italian action if French accepted proposal. Mr. Stimson said that Italy would come tumbling into line. Mr. Marriner later scouted any possible danger of Italy turning to other friends. Mr. Gibson is not expected to leave Rome before evening of November 4.

<sup>1</sup> The text here is uncertain.

## No. 260

### *Letter from Lord Tyrrell to Sir R. Vansittart*

[A 7215/1/45]

PARIS, November 3, 1930

Don't think me a nuisance but I had another visit from Massigli this morning who is evidently anxious to know whether there is any disposition on our part to respond to the overtures made last week. He expects to leave for Geneva on Wednesday and lives in hopes of knowing something before his departure.

2. I told him I had heard from you and that you had promised to give the question your most serious consideration.

3. Massigli repeated today that having thoroughly gone into the question he felt convinced that the two Admiralties could come to an agreement on the big cruiser question and that as regards submarines his experts here were less uncompromising than they had been in the past. His point is that as regards submarines the French proposal is one of replacement and not of new construction, which should help in bringing about a compromise.

4. I agree with Massigli and with Manzoni, the Italian Ambassador, whom I have always found a very shrewd judge of the local political situation, that never have the powers that be here been so favourably disposed towards reduction in armaments as they are now, and that if they get snubbed on the present occasion we shall be playing the game of the nationalists here who of course are opposed to any reductions.

5. As I suggested to you in my letter of last week, the present amiable frame of mind is largely due to the discovery which they have made that increased

armaments imply an extension of military service and heavy expenditure. Both these items work for the triumph of the Socialists at the next general election. The latter are pushing vigorously their campaign in favour of disarmament, especially in the south and in the country districts. They are out to capture the small peasant vote and as you will recollect from your previous stay here, the peasant is against armaments.

6. If you agree with me I hope you will give a good push towards obtaining a favourable reception for last week's proposals.

TYRRELL

No. 261

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir R. Lindsay (Washington)*

*No. 565 Telegraphic [A 7188/1/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, November 4, 1930

Your telegram No. 370.<sup>1</sup>

Please express to Mr. Stimson our warmest thanks for having kept us so fully informed of the steps which he has taken and of Mr. Gibson's conversations in Paris and Rome. We note with interest Mr. Stimson's further instructions to Mr. Gibson to revisit Paris to make new proposals to the French Government to the effect that France should agree on 'fleet figures acceptable to Great Britain', and adhere to Part III of the London Naval Treaty. You may add, for the strictly confidential information of the Secretary of State, that we have had indications that the French Government are now favourable to move in this direction and that His Majesty's Government will not be averse from entering on discussions on this point with the French, provided that this can be done in such a way as not to alienate Italy and to render more difficult Italy's ultimate accession to the Naval Treaty.

In view of the above it might perhaps be preferable that Mr. Gibson should abstain for the moment from making proposals to the French Government in this sense, (see the penultimate paragraph of your telegram), but this is a point on which Lord Tyrrell and Mr. Gibson might perhaps be allowed, after consultation, to use their discretion.

Repeated to Paris No. 126.

<sup>1</sup> No. 259.

No. 262

*Mr. A. Henderson to Lord Tyrrell (Paris)*

*Nos. 127 and 128 Telegraphic [A 7215/1/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, November 4, 1930

Following from Sir R. Vansittart.

Your letters of October 28 and 30 and November 3<sup>1</sup> have been very carefully considered both here and at the Admiralty and have been submitted to

<sup>1</sup> Nos. 253, 255, and 260.

the Prime Minister as Chairman of the Conference and to the Secretary of State. We are very interested in the idea that France should now endeavour to reach an agreement with us so as to enable her to accede to Part III of the Treaty. What of course we have always desired is a Five-Power Treaty, but so great have the difficulties proved to be between France and Italy that we should not be averse from discussing the question of accession of France, provided that, as we are inclined to think possible, a way can be devised which will not militate against an eventual Italian accession or acquiescence; and provided also that we can be sure the present French proposal is really sincere and not merely an attempt to put Italy in a corner, and so perhaps render the situation still more embarrassing without any gain in the cause of disarmament. On this latter point we must largely be guided by you, and what follows is on the assumption that you are satisfied that the French really mean business.

The position as between France and England when the Naval Conference was adjourned was that in each category of ships (and not only in submarines) there was a margin between what the respective Governments considered to be fair ratios of naval strength as between the two countries. We are glad to learn that, in Massigli's view, there should now be no further difficulty in regard to cruisers, but Massigli would no doubt agree that this point would have to be discussed more fully before it can be said that agreement has been reached between us. As regards submarines we indicated unofficially, during the Naval Conference, that we might be prepared to accept in the last resort a figure of 65,000 tons for December 1936 (the figure which France could reach without premature scrapping if construction were suspended) provided that we had some sort of assurance that the French would not regard this as a final figure but as a stage towards an eventual parity figure of 52,700. This figure of 65,000 is already very high when compared with our treaty figure of 150,000 tons for destroyers and 52,700 tons for submarines. It is difficult to see how we could reasonably be expected to make concessions beyond this point, but we are quite ready to discuss this question of our naval ratios again with every desire to reach an early solution. The French Government will agree that in that event it will be desirable to keep the Italian Government informed of what we are doing.

Granted the foregoing and that conversations are to start again at Geneva between French and Italian experts, the most advantageous procedure would have to be considered. The Prime Minister is inclined to feel that the moment has now come when we must be associated with any further discussions and the best method of providing for this will have to be arranged with the French and Italian Governments. We should of course be glad of any suggestion which the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs may care to offer in this direction. It would be a natural corollary of any tripartite discussions that the question of levels should be considered between the French and British experts, and conversations on this point could be carried on concurrently with those relating to the Franco-Italian problem. The purpose of these conversations would be to explore the ground thoroughly in an endeavour to



discover a possible solution or solutions which could then be considered by the French and Italian Governments.

Please speak to Berthelot and Massigli at once in the sense of my two preceding paragraphs and ascertain their views. If the French Government is in agreement with this procedure we could then ascertain in Rome whether British participation in the impending discussions would be agreeable to the Italian Government.

#### No. 263

*Sir R. Lindsay (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received November 5)*  
*No. 373 Telegraphic [A 7232/1/45]*

WASHINGTON, November 4, 1930

Secretary of State sent for me today to give me for transmission to you his latest news from Rome. Mr. Gibson had reported on October 31 that French Ambassador at Rome had told Signor Grandi that his Government was quite ready to resume conversations but that they required as a preliminary condition some categorical abandonment of claims to parity. This had depressed the spirits of Signor Grandi. It was also quite out of harmony with the State Department's information from Paris which corresponded with yours (see Paris telegram No. 180<sup>1</sup>). Mr. Gibson also reported that the Italian Government had heard of a suggestion to bring France into Treaty without Italy and showed some resentment at this contemplated isolation. He had therefore decided not to avail himself of the discretionary authority given him by the Secretary of State to proceed to Paris and pursue this scheme further and in this decision the State Department concurred. Moreover Mr. Gibson understood that French and Italian agents were meeting at Geneva for Preparatory Commission in a more favourable frame of mind to continue naval conversations and he thought it would be better for the moment to leave them to do their best.

<sup>1</sup> No. 254.

#### No. 264

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received November 5)*  
*No. 185 Telegraphic [A 7234/1/45]*

ROME, November 4, 1930

My telegram No. 181.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Gibson who is leaving for Geneva this afternoon tells me that he saw Minister for Foreign Affairs and Rosso together yesterday evening and is rather more satisfied with result. Grandi had said he had informed Signor Mussolini of proposal and that Italian Government were most anxious to come to an understanding in the matter. They would prefer and would at Geneva do everything in their power to arrive at direct agreement with

<sup>1</sup> No. 257.

French but were greatly discouraged at French Ambassador having stipulated that preliminary to resumption of conversations should be Italian abandonment of parity. If agreement were impossible Italian Government would favourably consider proposal for unilateral declarations.

Mr. Gibson found Minister for Foreign Affairs much upset by a report from Italian Ambassador in London who had been to Foreign Office to enquire whether there was truth in rumours that France intended to accede to London Treaty and make a pact *à quatre* leaving Italy out in the cold. Italian Ambassador in London had reported answer to have been that this was a possibility and would not be a bad thing as it might compel Italy to come in. Minister for Foreign Affairs had said that in view of nervous and excited state of feeling here on the whole question the idea of forcing Italy in was the very one to make her stand out. Minister for Foreign Affairs had alluded to (? alleged)<sup>1</sup> French battleship programme and had declared that Italy would though reluctantly feel bound to meet it by similar building.

In reporting to Washington Mr. Gibson had urged every effort should be used to persuade French to make situation easier for Italy and to resist the temptation to isolate her. He was convinced that Italians had no desire to build and were very anxious to come to agreement if only they could do so without loss of prestige.

<sup>1</sup> The text here is uncertain.

## No. 265

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir R. Graham (Rome)*

*No. 136 Telegraphic [A 7234/1/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 6, 1930*

Your telegram No. 185<sup>1</sup> (of November 4. Franco-Italian naval negotiations).

Report alleged to have been made by Italian Ambassador is quite incorrect. Any suggestion of forcing Italy into the Naval Treaty would of course be absurd. What actually occurred is as follows, the record of the conversation on October 31 having been made by Mr. Craigie immediately after the interview with every care.

The Italian Ambassador enquired, with reference to press reports on the rumoured intention of France to ratify the Naval Treaty or to accede separately to Part III thereof, what would be the attitude of His Majesty's Government towards such a proposal. His Excellency was informed that as no official proposal had been received it was not possible to say what attitude His Majesty's Government would adopt. Mr. Craigie's personal view was that the tendency in this country would be to welcome any step which seemed likely to promote naval disarmament.

The Ambassador was asked whether he could give any idea as to the

<sup>1</sup> No. 264.

probable repercussion in Italy of any such proposal if it should be made, and replied that in his personal opinion there would not be much effect in Italy one way or the other. Italy would remain entirely free to build or not as she chose, and this was the position favoured by the Government. He personally did not consider that any offence would be taken in Italy if France acceded to the Naval Treaty as a whole.

The above had been reported to you in my despatch No. 1211<sup>1</sup> of November 5.

Repeated to Paris by bag No. 132.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

## No. 266

*Lord Tyrrell (Paris) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received November 6)*

*No. 188 Telegraphic [A 7244/1/45]*

PARIS, November 6, 1930

1. I saw M. Berthelot this morning and communicated to him the views contained in your telegram No. 128.<sup>1</sup>

2. He welcomed your decision to authorize Anglo-French conversations and promised to telegraph to Massigli today to give him the necessary authority and to communicate to him our views as regards the naval position between France and England. He appeared more optimistic as regards cruisers than as regards submarines and he entirely concurred in your proposal that the Italians should be kept fully informed of what we are doing in order that they should have no excuse for thinking that they were being left out in the cold.

3. He agreed with me that the sooner Mr. Craigie got out to Geneva and saw Massigli the better.

4. His impression is that the Italians are ready to talk at Geneva and he told me in confidence that he had suggested indirectly to Mussolini that whilst strictly adhering to their respective positions on the question of parity they should endeavour to continue conversations with a view to arriving at a practical agreement to cover the period until 1936.

<sup>1</sup> No. 262.

## No. 267

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir R. Graham (Rome)*

*No. 137 Telegraphic [A 7244/1/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, November 7, 1930

Your telegram No. 185<sup>1</sup> (of November 4: Franco-Italian naval question).

His Majesty's Government have learnt with much satisfaction that conversations between French and Italian experts are to be resumed at Geneva

<sup>1</sup> No. 264.

immediately. In view of their close concern with every phase of this question they would like to co-operate by participating in the coming discussions, provided the French and Italian Governments agree to such a course. It is understood that the idea of British participation in these conversations has always been agreeable to the Italian Government but I should be glad to receive your assurances on this point before deputing an expert to assist in the discussions.

Please let me have a reply today if possible.

Repeated to Paris by bag No. 134.

No. 268

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir R. Graham (Rome)*

*No. 139 Telegraphic [A 7244/1/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 7, 1930*

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

The French Government have lately suggested informally that if we agreed they would be prepared to undertake a joint examination of Franco-British naval ratios in the hope of reaching an agreement which would enable France to accede to Part III of the London Naval Treaty. We have, of course, always desired a five-Power treaty, but the difficulties between France and Italy have proved such that we are not averse from discussing the question of French accession provided, as seems possible, that a method can be devised which will not militate against an eventual Italian accession or acquiescence. We have accordingly replied expressing our readiness to discuss the question of our naval ratios again with every desire to reach an early solution on the understanding that the Italian Government are kept informed.

We feel—and have so informed the French Government who share our view—that it would be a natural corollary of any tripartite naval discussions that may take place at Geneva that the question of levels should be considered between French and British experts, and that conversations on this point could be carried on concurrently with those relating to the Franco-Italian problem, their object being to explore the ground thoroughly in an endeavour to discover a possible solution which would then be considered by the French and Italian Governments.

The above is for your information and guidance. Such nervousness has been displayed in Rome over press and other reports of the possibility of France acceding to the Naval Treaty without waiting for Italy that I doubt whether it would serve any useful purpose for you to go into these details with the Italian Government when seeking their views on British participation in the coming conversations between French and Italian experts at

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. In this telegram Sir R. Graham was informed that nothing was known in the Foreign Office of a rumour (which Sir R. Graham had reported) that French accession to the naval treaty would be subject to a recognition of French naval superiority over Italy by means of a sliding scale.

Geneva. Moreover, the question of an Anglo-French agreement on naval levels having first been raised by the French Government we feel that it will be for them rather than for us to inform the Italian Government, especially as the British experts would not go to Geneva solely for discussions with their French colleagues but primarily to participate in tripartite conversations on the whole question including the Franco-Italian position.

Repeated to Paris by bag No. 135.

#### No. 269

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received November 8)*

*No. 191 Telegraphic [A 7279/1/45]*

ROME, November 7, 1930

Your telegram No. 137.<sup>1</sup>

In reply to my enquiry Minister for Foreign Affairs informs me that the Italian Government will welcome British participation in these conversations.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No. 267.

<sup>2</sup> In view of these exchanges with the French and Italian Governments, His Majesty's Government decided to send Mr. Craigie to take part in discussions at Geneva. Mr. Craigie subsequently continued the discussions in Rome and Paris. In view of their technical nature detailed reports of the conversations have not been included here. A memorandum by Mr. Craigie (No. 271) gives a summary of the negotiations.

#### No. 270

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received November 8)*

*No. 193 Telegraphic [A 7289/1/45]*

ROME, November 8, 1930

Your telegram No. 139.<sup>1</sup>

I agree but consider it important that Italians should be informed at an early stage and before they can discover it for themselves. Further, feeling some misgiving as to whether and how French may attempt the task, I would urge that action should be carefully concerted so as to incur minimum risk of arousing Italian susceptibilities and suspicions.

<sup>1</sup> No. 268.

#### No. 271

*Memorandum by Mr. Craigie on his conversations at Geneva, Rome and Paris*

*[A 21/21/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, January 1, 1931

In letters to Sir Robert Vansittart I have reported fully on the conversations as they proceeded, but it seems desirable that in the present report, before

explaining the results of these negotiations, I should give an outline of what occurred during these prolonged discussions.

2. The conversations took place at Geneva from the 9th November to the 10th December; at Rome from the 17th December to the 21st December; and at Paris on the 22nd and 23rd December. On the French side my interviews at Geneva were with M. Massigli, Admiral Darlan (representing the French Ministry of Marine) and Captain Deleuze. On the Italian side I was for the most part in touch with Signor Rosso alone, though I also occasionally saw the Italian experts, Captain Ruspoli and Captain Raineri-Biscia.

3. It will be remembered that the decision that I should take part in the conversations at Geneva was prompted by a suggestion in this sense from M. Berthelot to Lord Tyrrell.

### GENEVA CONVERSATIONS

#### (a) *Cruisers, Destroyers and Submarines*

4. When I reached Geneva I found that one conversation had already taken place between M. Massigli and Signor Rosso, in which the former had proposed that Mr. Gibson's plan of unilateral declarations of programme should be examined. Signor Rosso, while expressing readiness to discuss this proposal, had warned M. Massigli that any programme figures which Italy would insert in the declarations must necessarily be the same as those proposed by France. In reporting this conversation to me M. Massigli said that this Italian condition seemed to bring matters again to a complete deadlock.

5. This was the only conversation on the naval question which took place directly between the French and Italian experts during the whole of our time at Geneva. I hinted once or twice that a conversation *à trois* might be useful, but neither side showed any enthusiasm for this. M. Massigli, indeed, expressed the opinion that it was useless for the French experts to make any further direct proposals to their Italian colleagues, and that the best hope lay in suggestions being made through my [*sic*] intermediary.

6. The first thing to do was to induce both sides to agree that a further effort should be made to find a solution permitting France and Italy to accede to Part III of the Treaty of London; in other words, that solutions such as unilateral declarations which would not involve the completion of the Naval Treaty, should be postponed to a later stage, and only considered if we finally reached the conclusion that no better arrangement was possible. There was general agreement as to the great political advantages of the accession of France and Italy to Part III of the Naval Treaty, and the political effect in Rome of any such achievement was recognised both by my French and my Italian colleagues to be of considerable importance.

7. The French experts then propounded the principle that, as a prerequisite to further negotiation, I should accept the principle of a 642,000-ton French fleet (to be composed eventually of underage tonnage only), and that Italy should accept the principle that, as between France and Italy, there should be no new construction in any category, unless an equivalent

amount of tonnage had first been scrapped either in the same or in some other category.

8. I declined even to discuss the first point, as I held it was quite inadmissible that we should be asked to accept any principle as a prerequisite to a discussion concerning the division of tonnage within the categories. The French experts said that their instructions (which I gathered emanated from M. Dumesnil personally) were categorical on this point; but I think they themselves realised the impracticability of such directions, for they allowed the point to remain in abeyance, and proceeded, on their own responsibility, to discuss the distribution of tonnage within the categories on the basis of my proposals. The instructions were, however, very hampering, for the French experts were never in a position to tell me what was the distribution between the light surface vessel and submarine categories which their Government desired.

9. As regards the second point, I observed that it implied the definite acceptance by Italy of the principle of a 240,000-ton French superiority, whereas the whole basis of our negotiations was that we were to leave on one side any question of principle, whether of parity or of superiority. Furthermore, the French proposal would involve Italy's renunciation of her right to parity under the Treaty of Washington, for Italy could then only construct the capital ships and aircraft carriers to which she was entitled after first scrapping *underage* tonnage in the same or some other category, which would be an absurdity. France, on the other hand, could undertake her proposed capital ship and aircraft carrier construction without scrapping a single *underage* vessel.

10. On the above grounds I begged the French experts to reconsider this proposal, for there was not the slightest chance of its acceptance by Italy. In any case, I said I would prefer not to take the responsibility of putting forward a proposal which seemed likely to lead to another abrupt break in the negotiations.

11. I think my arguments produced some effect, for, while Admiral Darlan reverted to this proposal from time to time in subsequent discussions, I think he did so mainly 'par acquit de conscience,' and I was never again asked to submit it to the Italians. It is, however, quite possible that the plan may crop up again in future negotiations.

12. After further discussions with both sides, I put forward compromise proposals, the basis of which was that Italy should drop the figures which had appeared in earlier Italian schemes, indicating theoretical parity in every category of surface vessels, and that France, on her side, should accept, for the period of the treaty, the *de facto* position of parity already achieved by Italy in *underage* 8-inch and 6-inch-gun cruisers.

13. In order to avoid all appearance of establishing a definite ratio in the various categories, the proposed form of agreement contained no figures at all, but laid down instead the principle of a naval holiday (after the completion of the 1930 programmes) in the categories of the 8-inch-gun cruiser and the submarine and of construction only for replacement in the categories

of the 6-inch-gun cruiser and the destroyer. The proposal is shown in Table A in Appendix I, and a column (which would not appear in the treaty) is added showing the maximum tonnages in underage ships to be reached by France and Italy on the 31st December, 1936. Under this proposal France would have kept her existing total figure for the whole fleet (less special vessels) of 642,000 tons, and would, for the period of the treaty, have retained her existing margin of superiority over Italy of 240,000 tons.

14. I made it clear both to my Italian and French colleagues that, with our treaty figure of 150,000 tons for destroyers, I had no authority to accept so high a figure as 77,500 tons of submarines for France; but I suggested that, if we could find a basis for agreement on all surface vessels, the one remaining difficulty as regards submarines might be referred to our Governments for settlement.

15. A preliminary discussion of this proposal showed that it would be more likely to commend itself to both sides if the categories for 6-inch-gun cruisers and destroyers were to be merged, as had been foreshadowed in the negotiations on this subject during the London Naval Conference. In the revised form, as shown in Table B, Appendix I, the proposal was accepted as a basis of discussion by the French experts, who, however, stipulated that, before submitting it to their Government, they should be informed of the attitude of the Italian Government towards it.

16. Signor Rosso accordingly submitted the proposal to his Government and, I believe, recommended its acceptance. The Italian Government, however, raised difficulties on a point of procedure, saying that they would only be prepared to accept the proposal as a basis of discussion if it were to be submitted to them as a French proposal, or, at all events, as a proposal to which the French Government was known already to have agreed. As neither condition could be fulfilled, the path appeared again to be blocked.

17. Fortunately, the effective representations made by Sir Ronald Graham at this point resulted in Signor Rosso receiving authority to continue unofficial discussions on his own responsibility and without committing his Government.

18. Signor Rosso thereupon handed me a counter-proposal which, I happen to know, originated in Rome and which is shown as Table C in Appendix I. In submitting this, Signor Rosso was particularly insistent that, for political as well as for technical reasons, Italy could not accept a lower submarine tonnage than 52,700 tons, *i.e.*, the 'parity' figure accepted by the British Empire, the United States and Japan. I pointed out that the effect of his proposal was to modify in Italy's favour the submarine ratio with France by 8,000 tons and the 6-inch-gun cruiser and destroyer ratio by 14,000 tons; that it was even more unfavourable to France than the Italian proposals of August and September; and that it was far better not to put forward a proposal which was bound to be promptly rejected.

19. Finally, I agreed to modify Table B so as to give Italy 52,700 tons of submarines and to submit it to the French experts in this form (Table D in Appendix I) if Signor Rosso could first obtain authority to give me his



private and personal assurance that, provided it found favour in Paris, he could vouch for its acceptance in Rome. As part of the bargain, I asked for the acceptance of the capital ship and aircraft carrier solution, to which I will refer below.

20. Signor Rosso undertook to do this. As by this time the end of the Preparatory Commission's work was in sight, it was arranged that Signor Rosso should go himself to Rome for the purpose. If possible, he would send me the desired assurance by telegraph. But if this were not possible, and if he found that my presence in Rome would be helpful at this stage, he would so inform Sir R. Graham in order that I might seek the Secretary of State's authority to proceed to Rome before returning to Paris.

*(b) Capital Ships and Aircraft Carriers*

21. Up to the present I have, for the sake of clearncss, dealt with the cruiser, destroyer and submarine question alone, but, in point of fact, the question of France's margin of superiority in the capital ship and aircraft carrier categories had been injected into the proceedings at an earlier stage. At the present moment France has a superiority of over 99,000 tons in capital ships, and she also possesses one aircraft carrier of 22,000 tons, whereas Italy has none. Italy has always shown a readiness to allow this *de facto* superiority of 120,000 tons to continue until 1936, provided that no further capital ship construction were to be undertaken before that date; from the London Naval Conference onwards the continuance of this margin has been an important element in all schemes for a Franco-Italian settlement.

22. It is, however, the present intention of the French Government to utilise their existing balance of tonnage under the Washington Treaty to construct a certain number of capital ships as a reply to the additional 'pocket battleships' which Germany proposes to build. Furthermore, the French Government feel that the construction of capital ships and aircraft carriers will enable them to reduce their existing programme of ten 8-inch-gun cruisers, and thus, for the first time, render possible an agreement with us in the latter category of ship. I would remark in parenthesis that, however undesirable it may be on general principles that France should exercise her right to build the capital ships to which she is entitled under treaty, I see no prospect whatever of an Anglo-French settlement in the 8-inch-gun cruiser category unless she does so. Moreover, it should be remembered that France and Italy, like the other three Naval Powers, have waived their right to build the capital ships to which they will, under the Treaty of Washington, become entitled between 1930 and 1936, and that the construction now contemplated relates to vessels which they had the right to build (but did not build) before the opening of the London Conference.

23. The difficulty as regards the maintenance of France's capital ship margin arises from the fact that, under the Treaty of Washington, France will be obliged to scrap two existing capital ships when she contemplates her second new capital ship, whereas Italy, having already scrapped one capital ship and lost another, will be under no such obligation. Thus the French

capital ship margin of 99,000 tons would be reduced at one blow to 53,000 tons. The reason France will not have to scrap a capital ship when she completes her first new capital ship is that she has lost the battleship *France*.

24. As I have always felt that no agreement would be possible which did not maintain the total French margin in all categories in the neighbourhood of 230,000 to 240,000 tons, it was clear that some way must be discovered to avoid, during the period of the treaty, this abrupt drop of 46,000 tons. But the Italians, on their side, had always been counting on this very circumstance to reduce their margin of inferiority should France ever engage on capital ship construction. Moreover, they felt that the mere fact that France remained in the dark as to the size and gun calibre of any capital ship which Italy might build would act as a deterrent to any French capital ship construction. At first, therefore, I found the greatest reluctance on the Italian side even to discuss this question.

25. I made one or two proposals which, for one reason or another, were rejected by Signor Rosso and his experts, but Signor Rosso finally agreed to refer to his Government and to recommend the following proposal which I submitted to him: France to complete only one capital ship during the period of the treaty, the completion of the second to be deferred until 1937. France to scrap prematurely, on completion of the first new capital ship, a vessel of the *Jean Bart* class. Italy in return to agree not to lay down or complete any capital ship before France and to scrap an equivalent amount of over-age tonnage on completion of Italy's first new capital ship. An understanding also to be reached in regard to the displacement and maximum gun calibre of each capital ship, the suggestion being that both Powers should accept a displacement of 23,300 tons and a maximum gun calibre of 12 inches.

26. For aircraft carriers the proposal was that Italy should undertake not to lay down or complete any aircraft carrier before the dates on which France laid down or completed her proposed new aircraft carriers, the displacement suggested for each vessel being 15,000 tons.

27. The above arrangement was, as mentioned in paragraph 19, to form part of the general scheme, the acceptance of which was, we hoped, to form the subject of a private and personal assurance from Signor Rosso to me.

28. I also explained this capital ship scheme to the French experts, who found it 'interesting' but did not wish to submit it to their Government until they knew what view the Italian Government would take of it. France, indeed, would have some difficulty in rejecting it, since it represented the application to a particular case and to specified vessels of the French proposal for equivalent scrapping—a proposal which I had declined to submit to the Italians in the form of a general principle to regulate their construction for all time.

29. Before leaving Geneva I thought it well to explain confidentially to Mr. Sato, the Japanese representative on the Preparatory Commission, the position so far reached in these conversations. As regards submarines, I said that there seemed little hope of our being able to reduce the French below 77,500 tons because their present figure for submarines built, building and authorised was nearly 98,000 tons, and the French could not by 1936 reach

a figure lower than 77,500 without either scrapping underage submarines or else abandoning the construction of submarines which had been authorised by Parliament and on which a large amount of work had already been done. On the other hand, the British Government were quite unable to accept such a high submarine figure for France with the British treaty figure standing at 150,000 tons for destroyers. This constituted one of the most serious Anglo-French difficulties, but if the experts could find a basis of agreement on all other points, I felt that this final difficulty might be referred to the two Governments for settlement.

30. Mr. Sato took the view that the acceptance of any figure for French submarine tonnage which was appreciably higher than 52,700 would create a difficult position in Japan, where the Ministry of Marine had never been satisfied with the low figure for submarine tonnage accorded to Japan. It would be felt in Japan that France, by holding out longer, had secured from the Powers a higher submarine figure, and the Japanese Government's compliance at the London Conference would be criticised. In reply I deprecated any attempt to draw comparisons between isolated categories, particularly in cases like this where no naval or strategical consideration was involved, and suggested that the constitution of the French and Japanese fleets as a whole must be considered if comparisons were to be drawn. The French had a low capital ship ratio and had not even built up to that ratio; in 8-inch-gun cruisers the number proposed for France was seven, whereas Japan had twelve of these vessels, and these factors should be borne in mind when considering the French claims in the submarine category. Moreover, the treaty figure of 52,700 tons had been decided upon during the London Conference because it was the figure which Japan would reach in 1936 without premature scrapping. The application of the same rule to France produced the figure of 77,500, so that naval circles in Japan would not be justified in talking about differential treatment against Japan. I repeated, however, that no one would be more delighted than His Majesty's Government if some means could be found of bringing the French submarine strength down to 52,700 tons.

31. Mr. Sato thanked me for this explanation and asked me to keep in close touch on this subject with Mr. Matsudaira when I returned to London.<sup>1</sup>

#### ROME CONVERSATIONS

32. On the 15th December I learnt from His Majesty's Ambassador at Rome that Signor Rosso considered it desirable that I should proceed to Rome to explain certain points on which difficulties had arisen. Sir Ronald Graham added that he also considered the visit desirable in the circumstances. With the Secretary of State's sanction I left for Rome on the 16th December.

<sup>1</sup> *Note in original text.*—Mr. Matsudaira called to see me on the 31st December and I gave him confidentially a full explanation of the position reached in the conversations. As regards the submarine question, he did not conceal that difficulties would be made by the Ministry of Marine in Japan if France received a higher figure than 52,700 tons, but he did not seem to regard this difficulty so seriously as did Mr. Sato in Geneva.

33. I found both Signor Grandi and Admiral Sirianni, the Minister of Marine, very much opposed to the proposed capital ship settlement, for reasons which I have outlined in paragraph 24 above. There were also certain points in regard to the cruiser and auxiliaries question which required clearing up. The conversations were prolonged, and I need not here report the arguments I used in support of the proposed scheme as a whole. Signor Grandi came round fairly soon to the idea of an agreement between Ministries of Marine as regards the displacement, maximum gun calibre and dates of laying down and completion of capital ships and aircraft carriers; but he remained strongly opposed to the idea of scrapping an equivalent overage tonnage on completion of the first new capital ship owing to the risk of thus establishing a principle or precedent to which the French would appeal at the 1935 conference. He even feared that the other naval Powers would in 1935 quote this precedent against Italy.

34. I said that I had at Geneva refused to submit to Signor Rosso a proposal involving a principle which we felt would be unfair to Italy, and he could feel assured that the British Government of 1935 would be no less fair to Italy than His Majesty's present Government. After all that had passed between us, it would be a breach of faith, of which no British Government would be guilty, to use Italy's acceptance of our proposals for overcoming present difficulties as a lever to force her in 1935 to accept a principle which she considered unfair.

35. I suggested that much must depend on the wording of the proposed undertaking. An exchange of letters between the two Ministries of Marine was, perhaps, a form of undertaking which might prove acceptable both in Paris and Rome, and Signor Grandi thereupon asked me to draft a letter indicating the kind of wording I had in mind. This draft letter is attached as Appendix II.

36. It was not until late on the 20th instant that Signor Grandi informed me privately and confidentially that, if we could get the French to accept the proposed agreement as a whole, he would not allow the difficulty about scrapping to stand in the way of a settlement. Admiral Sirianni was still opposed to any discussion of the capital ship question, but so important did Signor Grandi consider the political advantages of a settlement to be, that he was now prepared to authorise Signor Rosso to give me the private and personal assurances for which I had come to Rome.

37. There is no doubt in my mind that Signor Grandi, Signor Rosso and the moderate elements in Rome sincerely desire a settlement of the naval question with France, not only on technical and financial grounds, but on account of the political *détente* which may be expected to follow and of their preference for working in cordial co-operation with the Naval Treaty Powers rather than with what may be termed the malcontent group of Powers. So far, the influence of these moderate elements prevails with Signor Mussolini, who, however, has his own ideas as to the correct method of bringing about good relations with France. But the Duce is naturally in close touch

with representatives of the more extreme Fascist elements, who favour other and more adventurous courses. I hardly think it is an exaggeration to say that the success or failure of the present efforts to bring about a settlement of the naval question (at all events, up to 1936) will have a profound effect upon the future course of Italy's foreign policy.

38. The assurances which I received in Rome cover a complete settlement from the capital ship to the submarine. The scheme for the capital ship and aircraft carriers remains as outlined in sections 25 and 26 of this memorandum, except that the idea now is that, instead of Italy's scrapping an 'equivalent tonnage' on completing her first capital ship, she should scrap 27,000 tons of overage cruisers, *i.e.*, all that would remain of her overage cruisers after the scrapping of the *Ferrucia*. As regards cruisers, destroyers and submarines, Italy will accept the scheme outlined in Table D provided that France will accept it as a whole.

39. The statistical effect of these arrangements on the position of the French and Italian navies in 1936 is shown in the memorandum in Appendix III. France gets a big superiority in every category except the 8-inch-gun cruiser category, and even here she receives valuable compensation in the form of a superiority of 59,000 tons of overage cruisers, all with a main armament superior to 6-inch calibre. Her guaranteed superiority would be 226,000 tons, but, in point of fact, she could with complete security rely on the retention of a superiority of at least 240,000 tons.

40. It is only necessary to compare the position thus reached with the position taken up by the Italian Government during the Naval Conference in order to realise what a long step in advance has been made by Italy. The sacrifice of the figures giving theoretical parity and the readiness to make a friendly arrangement in regard to capital ships (which she is under no sort of obligation to do) are concessions for which I feel Italy should be given full credit.

41. It is, of course, unfortunate that the Italian Government could not accept my original proposal in Table B as it stood, for the increase of the Italian submarine figure from 44,600 tons to 52,700 tons will considerably increase the difficulties in regard to the French claim to superiority in the annual construction programmes of the two countries. But I felt that at the present stage it would be quite useless to press the Italian Government to agree to more, and I am agreeably surprised that they should have agreed to do as much.

42. In the course of my last interview with Signor Grandi I said how important it was that the extent of British participation in these conversations should be left as nebulous as possible, for there were doubtless extremists in both countries who might be ready to resent what they would regard, in their ignorance of the facts, as British interference in a predominantly Franco-Italian question. Speaking with great emphasis, Signor Grandi said there was no chance at all of such a view being taken in any quarter in Italy, where our efforts to help towards a settlement had always been welcome and would always remain so.

## PARIS CONVERSATIONS

43. I arrived in Paris on the 22nd instant, and saw M. Massigli and Captain Deleuze the same evening. I explained the results of my visit to Rome, and M. Massigli seemed quite enthusiastic, congratulating me on what I had brought back, and saying I must have worked very hard. Owing to the internal political crisis, M. Sarraut<sup>1</sup> had not yet had time to devote any attention to this complex matter, nor was it deemed advisable to rush him too much. But the proposal I had brought would be carefully considered, and M. Massigli hoped we might have a further meeting immediately after the New Year.

44. So far, so good; but I thought I noticed a distinct hardening in M. Massigli's attitude towards Italy since our conversations in Geneva. He was full of Italy's precarious financial and economic position; of her abortive efforts to secure a loan first in the United States and later in Scandinavia; of the danger that, a naval agreement once concluded, Italy would be able to secure the desired loan, spend the proceeds on building warships, and snap her fingers in our faces. France had only to wait a little and Italy would come on hands and knees and beg France for a loan at almost any price. M. Massigli held that a naval agreement with us was still of the first importance, but he now affected to regard the negotiation of an agreement with Italy almost with indifference.

45. I said I felt that he must have received altogether exaggerated reports in regard to Italy's financial needs. In any event, such a policy as he seemed to contemplate struck me as shortsighted, for I could see little likelihood of a species of financial embargo being indefinitely maintained against Italy, particularly now that she was showing a real disposition to be helpful and conciliatory on the naval question.

46. It was arranged that we should have another interview on the following morning, at which Admiral Darlan, now Naval Secretary to the new Minister of Marine, would be present.

47. Early the next morning Captain Deleuze called to see me, and I gave him, at M. Massigli's request, copies of the memorandum which appears as Appendix III, in order that the French experts might study it before our interview later in the morning. I had a long talk with Captain Deleuze, and found him, to all appearance, entirely well disposed.

48. At the ensuing interview I found Admiral Darlan far more rigid than he had been in Geneva. He had known in Geneva exactly what I was proposing to ask of Rome, but he had raised no specific objections to these proposals, although he had stated clearly that his instructions did not permit of his considering the scheme except in a personal and unofficial capacity. Admiral Darlan now objected to the scheme on the following grounds: It provided for parity in underage 8-inch-gun cruisers, whereas France's needs in this class of vessel were higher than Italy's; it gave only seven 8-inch-gun cruisers to France, whereas their minimum need was for eight, and even

<sup>1</sup> Minister of Marine in the administration formed by M. Steeg on December 13 after the resignation of M. Tardieu's administration on December 4.

eight was a big reduction on the original French programme for 1936 of ten cruisers; it left France with too great a proportion of overage tonnage, for to the 59,000 tons of overage Category A cruisers must be added the 52,000 tons represented by the three capital ships of the *Diderot* class, which would become overage next year; it thus gave France an overage total of 111,000 tons, whereas the maximum amount of overage which France desired to keep in her fleet of 642,000 tons in 1936 was 62,000 tons; it gave France an assured lead of only 222,000 tons, whereas she required 240,000 tons; and finally, the future new construction programmes to be completed by France during the period of the treaty would total 105,000 tons, whilst those for Italy would total 121,000 tons—a proportion which was quite inadmissible.

49. I replied that, except for the last point, Admiral Darlan was going over ground which we had repeatedly covered at Geneva, and that a 'compromise' presupposed that not only Great Britain and Italy, but France, also, would make some concessions; that under the proposed compromise France's strength in underage vessels would be 52 per cent. of the maximum strength allowed to the British Empire under the Treaty of London, and a still greater percentage of the underage strength which we should actually possess in 1936; and that, as France's naval strength had never in recent years (*e.g.*, since 1900) been more than 42 per cent. of ours, and had sometimes fallen to 30 per cent., it would be a little difficult for the British public to understand why a compromise giving France a 52 per cent. ratio, should be considered by the French Government to be unacceptable.

50. As regards Admiral Darlan's final point, I thought the figures for the annual construction programmes would prove, when properly worked out, to be less unfavourable to France than he had indicated, and, in any case, there might be ways and means of giving the French a slight lead in construction without interfering with the scheme as a whole.

51. It was finally arranged that the French authorities should now give the proposals careful consideration, and that M. Massigli should send me as soon as possible (probably about the 6th January) a private and unofficial communication, through Lord Tyrrell, giving their comments on the scheme. The French Government would probably at the same time communicate to us, in a more official form, what they considered to be the proper constitution of the French fleet (divided into categories) for the year 1936.

52. I afterwards lunched with M. Massigli, Admiral Darlan, Captain Deleuze and M. Jean Paul-Boncour.

53. M. Massigli gave me a message from M. Briand to the effect that he had hoped to see me during my passage through Paris, but that, as the recent leakage had put the press on the *qui vive*, it might be more prudent to defer the interview until my next visit. With this I fully agreed.

54. Before taking my leave I impressed on M. Massigli and his colleagues that the proposals I had made represented the utmost limit to which I saw any prospect of inducing either my own Government or the Italian Government to go; that if the French Government really found it impossible to accept them (subject to amendments of detail), there would be no alternative

but to tear up the scheme and perhaps to start over again on some other basis; but that I believed, in that event, my Government would feel that, in allowing me, as an unofficial 'expert', to make the attempt I had made, they had gone as far as they properly could, and that the initiative thereafter must rest with others, whose interests were at least equally involved.

55. This language seemed rather to take my French friends aback, and M. Massigli enquired what would then happen about article 21 of the Treaty of London. I said I felt confident that there would be no difficulty in convincing the United States Government that we had gone to the limit in our endeavours to promote an agreement; if at some future time Great Britain were reluctantly compelled to have recourse to article 21, I did not believe that in the United States the blame would be held to lie with us.

56. While the final interview with the French experts may appear, on the face of it, to be discouraging, I do not personally regard it as such. I had fully anticipated that the French would appear to retire as we and the Italians advanced, and that the French reception of the proposals would be unenthusiastic, as, indeed, had been the first Italian reaction. But, in point of fact, we are now not far from an agreement. I have no doubt at all that, if we could offer the French eight 8-inch-gun cruisers, and if Italy would allow France a superiority of one modern ship in this category, the French, while claiming more up to the eleventh hour, would end by accepting with avidity. Neither we nor the Italians can, of course, make such a concession, and I merely mention this as showing that we are now probably all of us separated to the extent only of a single 10,000-ton ship. While it would, I believe, be fatal to attempt any change now as regards 8-inch-gun cruisers, there are, I believe, minor adjustments in other categories, within a total limit of 10,000 tons, which would ease the French situation *vis-à-vis* Italy, and might, perhaps, be considered at a later stage. But for the present I think the French Government should be made to feel that both London and Rome have said their last word.

#### GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

57. It will be seen from the above that there has been no attempt to drag into these conversations any question of a new political guarantee, and I remain of opinion that this naval question can, if we take a hand in it, be settled without the aid of any political solvent. This is not to say that the French would not revert to the idea of a political guarantee if they were to get any inkling that it might still be considered by His Majesty's Government; but I think the French delegates convinced themselves during the London Naval Conference that public opinion in this country is opposed to such a policy in present circumstances. The result which the French would naturally and properly expect to flow from a naval settlement would be close and friendly co-operation between the five naval Powers before and during the General Disarmament Conference.

58. During the whole of my time in Geneva I kept in the closest touch with Mr. Gibson and Mr. Hugh Wilson, American Minister at Berne, whose



attitude was throughout most helpful and encouraging. They took the line that it would be better for them not to be mixed up in any way with the details of the negotiations because the United States might thus be in a better position to come in at the end and help in overcoming some final or particularly stubborn difficulty. They informed me that the United States Government had been gratified to learn that a British 'expert' had been instructed to engage in these informal discussions. Similarly, I informed the United States Ambassador at Rome and the United States Chargé d'Affaires in Paris of my conversations in those capitals. During my stay in Rome Signor Rosso showed me a telegram from the Italian Ambassador in Washington recording an interview in which Mr. Stimson informed him that both the President and himself had been glad to learn that the Italian Government had invited me to visit Rome, and earnestly hoped that everything possible would now be done by Italy to facilitate a naval agreement.

59. I should like to pay a tribute to the keenness and ability with which Signor Rosso co-operated throughout in our discussions. Had it not been for his ready help in trying to find solutions for the various problems which presented themselves, I feel sure that the negotiations would have broken down at an early stage and it would certainly have not been possible to bring the Italian Government to accept the solution proposed to them at Rome without Signor Rosso's steady support. M. Massigli's position was more difficult. He is, in my opinion, anxious for an agreement, but he seldom, if ever, saw me without his experts and, in their presence, seemed anxious not to convey the slightest impression of weakness. Towards the end of our time at Geneva, however, we had some satisfactory conversations, and I feel that the French experts, if the matter lay with them, would gladly accept an agreement very much on the lines of the compromise now under consideration.

60. I am also greatly indebted to His Majesty's Ambassadors at Paris and Rome for the valuable advice and help which they gave me during these conversations.

#### CONCLUSION

61. To sum up, the present position is as follows: I have a private and personal assurance from Signor Rosso that, subject to French acceptance, he can undertake to secure the agreement of his Government to the following compromise:—

##### *Capital Ships and Aircraft Carriers*

62. An unofficial understanding, preferably in the form of an exchange of letters between Ministers of Marine, to be reached in regard to construction up to the 31st December, 1936. The basis of this understanding to be as follows: France to complete only one capital ship during the period of the treaty, the completion of the second to be deferred until 1937. France to scrap prematurely on completion of the first new capital ship, a vessel of the *Jean Bart* class. Italy, in return, to agree not to lay down or complete any

capital ship before France, and to scrap 27,300 tons of overage pre-Washington cruisers on completion of her first new capital ship. An understanding also to be reached in regard to the displacement and maximum gun calibre of each capital ship, the suggestion being that both Powers should accept a displacement of 23,300 tons and a maximum gun calibre of 12 inches.

63. As regards aircraft carriers, Italy to undertake not to lay down or complete any aircraft carrier before the dates on which France lays down or completes her proposed new aircraft carriers, the displacement suggested for each vessel being 15,000 tons.

64. It should be noted that I have not received any actual assurance in regard to an undertaking to scrap Italy's pre-Washington cruisers, but I have been given to understand most privately that, if everything else can be arranged, this difficulty will not be allowed to stand in the way.

*Cruisers, Destroyers and Submarines*

65. The final proposal is as follows:—

<i>Cruisers</i> with guns of more than 6·1-inch (155 mm.) calibre	No further construction after completion of the 1930 programme.
<i>Cruisers</i> with guns of 6·1-inch (155 mm.) calibre or less, and <i>Destroyers</i>	Construction only for replacement of vessels built, building or authorised. Vessels becoming overage during the period of the treaty to be scrapped on being replaced.
<i>Submarines</i> . . . . .	No further construction after the completion of the 1930 programme, except for replacement when the total submarine tonnage falls below 52,700 tons. Overage vessels to be scrapped when the tonnage surpasses the said figure.

66. The above table would be all that would appear in the treaty (apart from minor explanatory details), but the maximum naval strength which France and Italy could attain under the proposal on the 31st December, 1936, would be as follows:—

	<i>France</i>	<i>Italy</i>
Capital ships . . . . .	187,091	109,866
Aircraft carriers . . . . .	52,146	30,000
8-inch-gun cruisers . . . . .	70,000	70,000
6-inch-gun cruisers and destroyers . . . . .	199,305	157,118
Submarines . . . . .	77,548	52,700
	586,090	419,684
Overage cruisers . . . . .	59,626	..
	645,716	419,684

(The above figures are subject to variations within a few thousand tons, and the work of checking is now being carefully undertaken by the Admiralty.)

67. Under this proposal, France would have an assured margin of superiority over Italy of 226,000 tons. If to this is added the French superiority in 'special vessels', the French margin would be 253,000 tons. If, as is most probable, Italy does not build ton for ton against France in the capital ship and aircraft carrier categories, the French margin of superiority would be much higher. The position is set out in more detail in Appendix III.

68. The above compromise is now under consideration by the French Government. Owing to the unfortunate publicity which occurred about the time I reached Paris, and probably also to the fact that M. Sarraut had not at that time been able to familiarise himself with this subject, and that the Ministry of Marine was consequently in the hands of Admiral Violette, the Chief of the Naval Staff, the preliminary reception of my proposals in Paris was not enthusiastic. We may expect the French reply about the 6th January, because M. Briand and Signor Grandi are anxious that, if at all possible, the fact of a basis of agreement having been found should be announced when they meet Mr. Henderson at Geneva during the forthcoming meeting of the Council.

69. I anticipate that the French reply will be unsatisfactory from our point of view, but this need not be taken too seriously; I believe in actual practice that the three Powers are now only fundamentally divided to the extent of some 10,000 tons, and if I am right in this surmise it would be unfortunate to allow these negotiations again to fall into abeyance merely because the French have an exaggerated idea of Italy's present financial situation, and are, therefore, for the moment, no longer so interested in an agreement with that country. The French Government are undoubtedly interested in an agreement with *this* country, and it remains for us to utilise this present French enthusiasm so far as we are concerned in order to bring about a tripartite, and ultimately a five-Power, agreement.

R. L. CRAIGIE

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 1, 1931.*

## APPENDIX I

TABLE A.—*First Proposal submitted to French and Italian Experts*

The Amount of Naval Construction to which France and Italy undertake to limit themselves up to December 31, 1936, is shown in following table:—

		<i>Results of Foregoing Limitation.</i>
		(NOTE.—This column would not be included in the treaty.)
<i>Cruisers—</i>		
(a) With guns of more than 6·1-inch (155 mm.) calibre	No further construction after completion of the 1930 programme	Italy and France, 70,000 tons each. (7 vessels.)
(b) With guns of 6·1-inch (155 mm.) calibre or less	Construction only for replacement of vessels built, building or authorised	Italy . . . 62,191 France . . . 64,527
<i>Destroyers</i> (as defined below)	Construction only for replacement of vessels built, building or authorised	Italy . . . 94,986 France . . . 134,780
<i>Submarines</i> . . . .	No further construction after completion of the 1930 programme	Italy . . . 44,690 France . . . 77,548

Vessels to be scrapped as they reach the age limits provided in the treaty, except as otherwise provided.

TABLE B.—*Amended Proposal submitted to French and Italian Experts and Italian Government*

The Amount of Naval Construction to which France and Italy undertake to limit themselves up to December 31, 1936, is shown in the following table:—

<i>Cruisers</i> with guns of more than 6·1-inch (155 mm.) calibre	No further construction after completion of the 1930 programme.
<i>Cruisers</i> with guns of 6·1-inch (155 mm.) calibre or less, and <i>Destroyers</i>	Construction only for replacement of vessels built, building or authorised. Vessels becoming overage during the period of the treaty to be scrapped on being replaced.
<i>Submarines</i> . . . . .	No further construction after completion of the 1930 programme. Overage vessels to be scrapped.

ANNEX TO TABLE B (Not for inclusion in Treaty)

*Results of Limitation in Table B (underage vessels only)*

<i>Cruisers</i> , 8-inch . . . . .	France and Italy . . . . .	70,000 tons each.
<i>Cruisers</i> , 6-inch, and <i>Destroyers</i>	France . . . . .	199,307 tons.
	Italy . . . . .	157,177 „
<i>Submarines</i> . . . . .	France . . . . .	77,548 „
	Italy . . . . .	44,690 „

TABLE C. *Counter Proposal submitted by Signor Rosso*

The amount of Naval Construction to which France and Italy undertake to limit themselves up to December 31, 1936, is shown in the following table:—

<i>Cruisers</i> with guns of more than 6·1-inch (155 mm.) calibre	No further construction after completion of the 1930 programme.
<i>Light Surface Vessels</i> with guns of 6·1-inch (155 mm.) or less	Completion of the 1930 programme and construction only for replacement of vessels becoming overage after the 1st January, 1930. Vessels becoming overage during the period of the treaty to be scrapped on being replaced, with the exception of pre-Washington light surface craft of more than 3,000 tons displacement, which may be retained as 'special vessels'.
<i>Submarines</i> . . . . .	No further construction after the completion of the 1930 programme, except for replacement, when the total submarine tonnage falls below 52,700 tons. Overage vessels to be scrapped when the tonnage surpasses the said figure.

TABLE D. *Final Proposal submitted to Italian Government and accepted privately and unofficially, subject to French acceptance*

<i>Cruisers</i> with guns of more than 6·1-inch (155 mm.) calibre	No further construction after completion of the 1930 programme.
<i>Cruisers</i> with guns of 6·1-inch (155 mm.) calibre or less, and <i>Destroyers</i>	Construction only for replacement of vessels built, building or authorised. Vessels becoming overage during the period of the treaty to be scrapped on being replaced.
<i>Submarines</i> . . . . .	No further construction after the completion of the 1930 programme, except for replacement, when the total submarine tonnage falls below 52,700 tons. Overage vessels to be scrapped when the tonnage surpasses the said figure.

# ANNEX TO TABLE D (Not for inclusion in Treaty)

## Results of Limitation in Table D (underage vessels only)

Cruisers, 8-inch . . . . .	France and Italy . . . . .	70,000 tons each.
Cruisers, 6-inch, and Destroyers . . . . .	France . . . . .	199,307 tons.
	Italy . . . . .	157,177 „
Submarines . . . . .	France . . . . .	77,548 „
	Italy . . . . .	52,700 „

## APPENDIX II

### *Draft Letter from Italian Minister of Marine to French Minister of Marine*

I am obliged to you for your letter of the . . . . . and I am much interested in the plans of the French naval staff for capital ship and aircraft carrier construction up to December 1936, which you were good enough to explain to me. I note that it is the intention of the French naval staff to lay down one battle cruiser of approximately 23,300 tons in . . . . . to be completed about . . . . . and a second battle cruiser in 1934, not to be completed before 1937. The main armament of these vessels will consist of . . . . . inch calibre guns. The French naval staff further propose to scrap a capital ship of the *Jean Bart* class on completion of the first new battle cruiser. As regards aircraft carriers, the French naval staff propose that one carrier of 15,000 tons should be laid down about . . . . . to be completed about . . . . . and that a second vessel should be laid down about . . . . .

The above dates are the earliest at which the proposed constructions, which must, of course, be subject to parliamentary sanction, will be undertaken, but it is always possible that the laying-down or construction of a ship may be retarded beyond the dates mentioned.

In thanking your Excellency for the frankness with which you have communicated these plans to me, and in order to eliminate as far as possible any appearance of competition in construction within the limits imposed by the Treaty of Washington, I am happy to be able to inform you that the intentions of the Italian naval staff in the same fields of construction are as follows:—

It is not proposed that either the first or the second battle cruiser should be laid down or completed before the dates mentioned in your letter and construction may be further retarded if it should suit the French naval staff to retard construction as contemplated in your letter.

As regards the displacement and main armament of the battle cruisers to be constructed, I have pleasure in informing your Excellency that the Italian naval staff do not propose that Italian vessels should be constructed which would exceed the maximum displacement and the maximum gun calibre mentioned in your letter.

I may add that if a first Italian battle cruiser is completed before the 31st December, 1936, the Italian naval staff intend, for reasons of economy, and

on other technical grounds, to dispose of the Italian pre-Washington cruisers during the period ending the 31st December, 1936, in accordance with one or other of the methods laid down in the London Naval Treaty, namely, by scrapping or by conversion into ships for training or experimental purposes or for target use.

May I be permitted to say in conclusion that in notifying your Excellency of our intentions my sole object is to respond in the same frank and friendly spirit as that which animated your letter and to avoid any unnecessary appearance of competition in these matters? In particular, our present declaration of intention should not be interpreted in any quarter as forming a precedent for any future negotiations on this subject relating to the period after the 31st December, 1936.

### APPENDIX III

#### MEMORANDUM

##### *Assumptions*

That France and Italy each complete one battle cruiser (23,333 tons) and two aircraft carriers (15,000 tons each) before the 31st December, 1936; that, on completion of the battle cruiser, France scraps a capital ship of the *Jean Bart* class (22,000 tons) and Italy<sup>1</sup> scraps 27,000 tons of pre-Washington cruisers.

Maxima tonnages in each category which could be obtained in 1936 under the proposed scheme:—

	<i>France</i>	<i>Italy</i>
Capital ships . . . . .	187,091	109,866
Aircraft carriers . . . . .	52,146	30,000
8-inch-gun cruisers . . . . .	70,000	70,000
6-inch-gun cruisers and destroyers . . . . .	199,305	157,118
Submarines . . . . .	77,548	52,700
	<hr/> 586,090	<hr/> 419,684
Overage cruisers . . . . .	59,626	
	<hr/> 645,716	<hr/> 419,684

If Italy constructs one battle cruiser and two aircraft carriers the margin would be 226,032 tons; the margin (including special vessels) would be 253,032 tons.

But Italy has no wish to construct a new capital ship and still less does she wish to construct aircraft carriers (which are held in some quarters to be unnecessary for Italy). If Italy, therefore, embarks on this construction at all, it is in the highest degree unlikely that she would construct more than one aircraft carrier, in which case the margin in 1936 would be 241,052 tons; the margin (including special vessels) would be 268,032 tons.

<sup>1</sup> *Note in original text:* I have not yet secured Italian agreement on the point.

The margin in cruisers, destroyers and submarines in 1936:—

Underage—					
6-inch-cruisers	.	.	.	.	2,334
Destroyers	.	.	.	.	39,853
Submarines	.	.	.	.	24,848
					<hr/> 67,035
Overage	.	.	.	.	59,626
					<hr/> 126,661

The present margin in cruisers and auxiliaries is 118,544, of which 71,806<sup>1</sup> is overage.

The 1936 margin in cruisers and auxiliaries is 126,661, of which 59,626 would be overage.

Thus the proportion of overage in this margin would be reduced from 62 per cent. to 48 per cent.

#### POSITION IN OVERAGE CRUISERS

French margin in Category A cruisers (counting <i>Edgar Quinet</i> and <i>Ferrucia</i> )—66,963—33,644	.	.	.	.	.	.	33,319
Actual Italian overage to-day (less <i>Ferrucia</i> )	.	.	.	.	.	.	27,345
Correct proportional figure for French Category A overage cruisers	.	.	.	.	.	.	60,664
Actual French overage to-day (excluding <i>Edgar Quinet</i> )	.	.	.	.	.	.	54,426
Compensation to France for loss of <i>Edgar Quinet</i> —retention of <i>Metz</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	5,200
							<hr/> 59,626

<sup>1</sup> *Note in original text:* This figure is taken from French sources.

#### No. 272

*Mr. A. Henderson to Lord Tyrrell (Paris), and Sir R. Graham (Rome)*  
*No. 153<sup>1</sup> Telegraphic [A 8181/1/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 16, 1930. 4.45 p.m.*

Following from Sir R. Vansittart, Naval Disarmament. It may now be assumed that no definite progress towards a Franco-Italian agreement can be made before the building truce between the two countries expires at the end of the month. In the circumstances it is to be considered whether it would not be possible to secure a prolongation of the truce.

What I have in mind is a simultaneous representation in Paris and Rome with that object in view, the United States and Japanese Governments being notified of the reasons therefor with the intimation that we would welcome similar action on their part if they saw fit.

<sup>1</sup> To Paris: No. 158 to Rome.

Please report by telegraph whether in your view such a step could usefully be taken without the danger of giving rise to resentment on the part of the Government to which you are accredited.

**No. 273**

*Lord Tyrrell (Paris) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received December 17)*  
*No. 214 Telegraphic [A 8184/1/45]*

PARIS, December 17

Your telegram No. 153.<sup>1</sup>

I fear it would be felt here that there would be no practical advantage in a representation such as you suggest. Truce expired on December 1 not December 31 and apparently the 7th cruiser about which there is no dispute will be 'mise sur cale' in next day or two if this has not already been done. Only other vessels included in 1930 programme appear to be submarines and I understand their 'mise sur cale' is not imminent. In any case I hope to be able to give you further information very shortly possibly tomorrow respecting the French Government's intentions regarding latter vessels. I gather further that French view is that Italians are not at the moment in a position to lay down any vessel.

Addressed to Foreign Office No. 214, repeated to Rome.

<sup>1</sup> No. 272.

**No. 274**

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received December 17)*  
*No. 231 Telegraphic [A 8187/1/45]*

ROME, December 17, 1930

Your telegram No. 158.<sup>1</sup>

I do not consider proposed step would be resented here.

<sup>1</sup> No. 272.

**No. 275**

*Mr. A. Henderson to Mr. Osborne (Rome)*  
*No. 1400 [A 8056/1/45]*

Sir,

FOREIGN OFFICE, December 17, 1930

The Italian Ambassador called on Sir R. Vansittart on the 10th instant and intimated that the Italian Government wished him to explain that, if nothing came of the present naval negotiations with France, they had made every possible concession and would not be to blame. His Excellency hinted



that no more 'concessions' could be made, and seemed depressed, having little expectation of a result.

2. Sir R. Vansittart replied that he himself was not quite so pessimistic, though he felt distinctly less hopeful than a week or so earlier. Both sides appeared to him to be treating the negotiations in an old-fashioned, not to say pre-war, spirit. There was far too much suspicion and far too much manœuvring for position. He could readily understand the anxieties of the French and Italian expert representatives at Geneva, but they were only subordinate officials and their conversations were *ad referendum*. There surely need not be so much anxiety about securing petty advantages. No commercial problem would nowadays be solved by these methods. It was politically extremely important to arrive at a solution, and with goodwill it could be done; and if that solution were not reached there would be the keenest disappointment in this country, and nobody—except possibly two or three experts—would be in a position to appraise the degrees of blame, nor would the press or public, or Parliament, so concern themselves with detail even if they were in a position to do so.

3. Sir R. Vansittart went on to emphasise that it was important to keep the negotiations going and not to let them drop, which would entail a fresh and wearisome start from the beginning.

4. Sir R. Vansittart also expressed disappointment that no progress of any material kind seemed to have been made in any direction. The Libyan and Tunisian questions, for example, were also at a standstill. The impression here was of a persistent vicious circle. His Majesty's Government did their best to promote an exit from it, and it was hoped that there would soon be indications of some material contribution from other interested quarters.

5. Count Bordonaro took the above in good part, but confessed that he did not believe France really wanted a naval agreement.

I am, &c.

ARTHUR HENDERSON

## No. 276

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received December 18)*

*No. 232 Telegraphic [A 8216/1/45]*

ROME, December 18, 1936

Your telegram No. 158.<sup>1</sup>

Following for Sir R. Vansittart from Mr. Craigie:—

In the course of (? discussions)<sup>2</sup> at Geneva I told the French experts I presumed that building truce would be continued beyond the end of November. They replied that M. Dumesnil had promised to defer giving formal order to place laying down of 1930 programme vessels until the end of December but that he had no power constitutionally to go beyond December 31.

<sup>1</sup> No. 272.

<sup>2</sup> The text here is uncertain.

I imagine to defer laying down of vessels until 1931 would require parliamentary sanction and I doubt whether debate would be desirable in the present circumstances.

Subject to Lord Tyrrell's opinion I fear that joint representations as proposed might do harm at this juncture and that preferable course would be unofficial enquiry by His Majesty's Ambassador as to whether there is any way round the difficulty without raising the matter in Parliament.

Conversations here have so far been satisfactory and if the French Cabinet survives to-day it is still possible that agreement might be reached between experts for submission to Government before the end of the year.

#### No. 277

*Lord Tyrrell (Paris) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received December 19)*

*No. 217 Telegraphic [A 8259/1/45]*

ROME, December 19, 1930

Owing to parliamentary crisis Minister of Marine has as yet been unable to give attention to question of naval negotiations and M. Massigli's view is that little useful work can now be done before the New Year. He himself will be absent from Paris from December 24 to January 2 or 3. He would however be delighted to have a talk with Mr. Craigie on his way through to London any time before the 24th.

2. I have today obtained confirmation that the French attitude to proposal to continue the building truce would be as stated in my telegram No. 214.<sup>1</sup> I should in these circumstances deprecate any action on our part at the moment: it could I fear do little good and may revive public discussion which at the moment seems to be dormant.

Addressed to Foreign Office No. 217 December 19, repeated to Rome telegram No. 2.

<sup>1</sup> No. 273.

#### No. 278

*Mr. A. Henderson to Lord Tyrrell (Paris)*

*No. 155 Telegraphic by bag [A 8216/1/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, December 19, 1930

Your telegram No. 217<sup>1</sup> (of December 19—Franco-Italian naval problem).

I agree that in all the circumstances proposed representation could not usefully be made and no action should be taken.

Repeated to Rome No. 160.

<sup>1</sup> No. 277.

*Lord Tyrrell (Paris) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received January 15, 1931)*  
*No. 33 [A 363/21/45]*

Sir,

PARIS, January 13, 1931

As instructed in your despatch No. 2730<sup>1</sup> of December 29, 1930, I saw M. Berthelot to-day on his return from the south of France on the question of the possibility of the substitution for the Franco-Yugoslav treaty due to expire at the end of this year of some tripartite treaty between France, Yugoslavia and Italy. M. Berthelot personally remains of the opinion which he expressed to me last July that the substitution of a tripartite treaty for the existing two-Power treaty will eventually be desirable. But he considers that in view of the present attitude of the Italian Government no action to this end is practical politics for the time being. He reminded me that M. Mussolini had himself stated not very long ago that the naval question alone interested him, and that, once it was settled, the question of Tunisia and of the Libyan frontier would settle themselves. M. Briand had always made it clear that the conclusion of a Franco-Italian arbitration treaty or treaty of friendship (or as M. Berthelot has suggested, a tripartite treaty of friendship and arbitration) will set the crown on the whole negotiation—naval and African—and from what M. Berthelot told me today I see no reason to doubt, as far as the French Government is concerned, the eventual achievement of this result. For the moment the declared attitude of the Italian Government seems to make progress towards it impossible.

2. As to the naval question (which is dealt with in a letter<sup>2</sup> addressed to Mr. Craigie by M. Massigli today) M. Berthelot took the view that it was unnecessary to be too pessimistic. The French Government thought that a solution would ultimately be found if only because of the increasingly serious economic situation in Italy. Italian feelers were still being put out for a loan and France had no wish to exploit Italy's difficulties, but she could hardly be expected to lend to Italy money which would be spent on enabling her to build up to naval parity with France. As soon as Italy was ready to discuss the naval question on the basis of practical considerations based on economics France would never exploit such a situation either for the humiliation of Italy or to promote exaggerated French aims.

I have, etc.,

TYRRELL

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. In this dispatch Lord Tyrrell was instructed to inquire of the French Government informally (i) whether they were still considering the idea of a tripartite Franco-Italo-Yugoslav treaty, and (ii) whether they had reached a decision with regard to the renewal of the Franco-Yugoslav treaty if by November 1931 no tripartite treaty had been arranged.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed. In this letter M. Massigli gave a number of technical reasons why the 'compromise' proposals put to the French Government by Mr. Craigie after his visit to Rome were unacceptable to them. Mr. Craigie replied to the French arguments on January 27.

*Memorandum from General Dawes to Sir R. Vansittart<sup>1</sup>*

[A 922/21/45]

AMERICAN EMBASSY, LONDON, *February 5, 1931*

In a message from the Secretary of State General Dawes has been informed that it has been pointed out to the American Ambassador in Paris that it would appear sufficient progress has been made in the Franco-Italian naval negotiations that, with a little good will on both sides, France and Italy might successfully conclude their conversations and become parties to the London Naval Treaty. Mr. Stimson has indicated to Ambassador Edge his realization that the Laval Government<sup>2</sup> has not yet been in office sufficient time fully to determine its attitude but nevertheless instructs the Ambassador to seek an early opportunity for a purely informal and unofficial talk with M. Briand. The Secretary of State desires that Ambassador Edge should inform M. Briand of the keen interest with which the United States Government has followed the work of the experts and how nearly they have approached each other in the discussions towards what would seem an early solution of the problem. Ambassador Edge has been instructed to point out to M. Briand that should these Franco-Italian negotiations, now reduced to their lowest terms, fail of a solution such an adverse effect would be created that the Secretary of State would seriously question the usefulness of participation by his Government in the forthcoming General Disarmament Conference to be held at Geneva. However, Ambassador Edge has been instructed to point out that Mr. Stimson is certain M. Briand will appreciate the real concern of the United States Government in the outcome of these negotiations.

Ambassador Edge has been instructed to confer with His Majesty's Ambassador in Paris,<sup>3</sup> who is conversant with all the details of the negotiations, before he seeks to have an informal talk with M. Briand. The Secretary of State also authorizes Ambassador Edge, in his discussion, to mention the subject to M. Laval.

<sup>1</sup> This memorandum was given to Sir R. Vansittart by General Dawes on February 6.

<sup>2</sup> M. Laval formed an administration on January 27 after the resignation of M. Steeg's administration.

<sup>3</sup> After consulting Lord Tyrrell Mr. Edge decided for the time to take no action.

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir R. Graham (Rome)*

No. 147 [A 696/21/45]

Sir,

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 6, 1931*

Signor Grandi called to see me on the morning of the 25th January, and after complimenting me on the manner in which I had discharged my duties

as chairman of the recent session of the League Council, went on to talk about disarmament. His Excellency said that the Italian Government were very anxious to co-operate very closely with His Majesty's Government in the preparations for, and during the proceedings of, next year's conference.

2. Referring to the recent conversations in Rome on the naval question, Signor Grandi said that his Government warmly appreciated all that His Majesty's Government had done in this connexion. The Italian Government, he reminded me, had not only accepted Mr. Craigie's assistance, but had actually invited it. His Excellency thought that the conversations between the experts had improved the position.

3. I called attention to the fact that the temporary naval building truce between France and Italy was about to expire, and in this connexion I wondered whether, if no final arrangement of the naval question could be secured at present, there could be a renewal of the naval holiday, say, for six months, or, what would be better still, until after the Disarmament Conference. Signor Grandi reacted most favourably to this suggestion, and I informed him that I would follow up the idea. If I saw any possibility of turning it into a definite proposal I should at once communicate with the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs through your Excellency.

4. Later in the same day I had luncheon in the train with M. Briand, and mentioned that I had had a talk with Signor Grandi just before leaving Geneva. I said that I understood that at the moment the Foreign Office were examining M. Massigli's reply to the latest suggestion put up by Mr. Craigie in regard to the relative naval strengths of France and Italy. But as the naval truce between these two countries was about to expire, I had begun to wonder, as I had hinted when I saw M. Briand at the Quai d'Orsay on my way out to Geneva, whether something could not now be done to prolong the truce. Signor Grandi had appeared to think well of my suggestion that the truce should be prolonged, at any rate for six months or, better still, until after the General Disarmament Conference next year.

5. M. Briand replied that for his part he did not anticipate any great difficulty about this, more especially as the naval experts had recently shown signs of a more accommodating mood, and only required to be kept under pressure to continue to be reasonable in the estimates of their needs. If, as he hoped, M. Sarraut retained his post in the new Government as Minister of Marine, all ought to be well when the naval estimates were introduced. In any case, M. Briand felt that the Massigli-Craigie-Rosso conversations should continue, and that the three of them might now go into the question of prolonging the building truce.<sup>1</sup>

I am, &c.

ARTHUR HENDERSON

<sup>1</sup> In view of M. Briand's statement Mr. Henderson suggested that Mr. Craigie should go to Paris in order to resume discussions with M. Massigli. M. Briand accepted this suggestion, and Mr. Craigie left for Paris on February 8. As a result of these conversations Mr. Craigie reported on February 12 that the presentation of the 1931 French building programme to the Naval Affairs Committee and the Chamber would be held up, but that

this suspension could not be for long because the naval estimates were already under discussion in the Chamber. At the same time Mr. Craigie reported strong opposition to the continuance of the temporary naval building truce in respect of the 1930 programme. He also pointed out that active work on the 1930 programme had been proceeding in France and Italy and that the technical effect (as opposed to the political effect) of the truce had never been great since it suspended only the actual date on which keels were laid down.

After further discussions of the terms of a possible Franco-Italian agreement Mr. Craigie returned on February 18 to London for consultation. He brought with him the draft of an arrangement which the French Government was willing to accept. According to this arrangement and subject to the agreement of Italy, France would be given the right to retain certain overage tonnage until 1936 in all categories except those of submarines and aircraft carriers, and would be allowed to complete, in addition to vessels authorized or building, new vessels during the same period of the following tonnage: capital ships, 46,666 tons; aircraft carriers, 30,000 tons; category 'B' cruisers and destroyers, 54,926 tons; submarines, 5,600 tons. Similar rights would be allowed to Italy, but Italy would retain only a small amount of overage tonnage, and the total volume of her 'permissible new construction' would be 4,997 tons less than that of France.

The total figures for French category 'B' cruisers and destroyers were 242,836 tons and for submarines 83,137 tons. His Majesty's Government felt unable to accept these figures as part of an international treaty without having recourse to Article 21 of the London Naval Treaty and increasing the destroyer tonnage of the British Commonwealth above the limit fixed in the London Treaty. They were, however, most anxious not to take either of these steps. Mr. Craigie was therefore instructed to return to Paris and to inform the French Government of the views of His Majesty's Government and also, if Italy were willing to accept the French proposals, to suggest a meeting in London of representatives of the signatories of the London Naval Treaty.

## No. 282

*Lord Tyrrell (Paris) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received February 20)*

*No. 25. Telegraphic: by telephone [A 1162/21/45]*

PARIS, February 20, 1931

Following from Craigie.

I saw M. Massigli this morning and spoke as instructed.

M. Massigli expressed great surprise on learning of this decision. So far as concerned our difficulty in accepting a French submarine figure of 83,000 tons, he pointed out that, at the time the Treaty of London was signed, France already had an authorised programme which would automatically have brought her figures up to 78,500 tons of underage submarines in 1936, and that she had in addition been given the right under Article 7 of the Treaty of London to construct two cruiser submarines with a total tonnage of 5,600, making 83,000 tons in all. In the circumstances he was quite unable to see how there could be any question of resort to article 21 of the Treaty in respect of a French submarine figure which was so clearly a French minimum when the Treaty was signed.

I intervened here to point out that the highest figure which we had ever been able to contemplate (even unofficially) for French submarines in 1936 had been 65,000, and that throughout our negotiations I had made it clear that my Government had never accepted a figure of 78,500 as a proper equilibrium with our own destroyer figure of 150,000 tons. The most I had

said was that if we could get a satisfactory agreement on all other points, I hoped that some way would be found to get round the practical difficulty created by the size of the present French figure of submarines built, building and authorized. M. Massigli agreed that this was the case. I added that at the time of the signature of the Treaty of London we still had the hope that for the sake of an agreement France might abandon the 11,000 tons of the 1930 programme and the 5,600 tons of the two cruiser submarines. It was the construction of this 17,000 tons odd which created the difficulty in relation to article 21 of the Treaty. M. Massigli remained, however, unimpressed by this argument.

As regards the position in cruisers and destroyers France would (counting both underage and overage) have 242,000 tons in 1936 as against 342,000 for the British Commonwealth. But this French figure contained 42,000 tons of overage tonnage and it had been recognised between us that the question whether this French overage was or was not ultimately to be replaced would be left entirely open, each side being entirely free to maintain its thesis at the 1935 conference without citing as a precedent anything that was done under the proposed arrangement.

Moreover, in considering the relative cruiser and destroyer strengths the 8-inch gun cruiser position must not be left out of count. If this were added the position in cruisers and destroyers would be 337,000 tons for France (of which 66,000 tons is not replaceable unless the 1935 conference were to come to a contrary decision) and 489,000 tons for the British Commonwealth (all of which was definitely replaceable). Here again M. Massigli could not believe that we could possibly contemplate a resort to article 21 in respect of a position so favourable to Great Britain.

Turning to the question of the proposed meeting in London, M. Massigli felt sure that his Government would not regard the idea favourably. If His Majesty's Government were unable to accept the proposed arrangement, France would have to resume her complete liberty of construction. The position in the Chamber was now such that the Government could not delay the 1931 programme for more than a few days. Great pressure had been brought to bear on the Ministry of Marine by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs on account of the real importance which the French Government attached to an early agreement with us, but he did not think for a moment that his Government would be able to maintain the offer they had made to us if it were now to be definitely rejected (pending the meeting of the 1932 conference). Thus the principal lever for reducing the 1931 programme to the level at which it now stood would be knocked from M. Briand's hands, and M. Massigli felt sure that the Ministry of Marine would insist on reverting to their original programme, which amongst other things, had been reduced from five submarines to one in order to fit in with the proposed arrangement. It had moreover always been intended that an eighth 8-inch gun cruiser should be included either in this year's or next year's programme and he did not see how the Ministry of Marine's intentions in this respect could any longer be opposed. The position therefore was that the French

programme in its original form must be submitted to the Chamber in the course of the next few days and the Italians would no doubt follow suit. Thereafter he could not see what useful purpose the meeting in London would serve. The French Government were most anxious to discuss with us all matters relating to preparations for the 1932 conference but, as regards land and air, they would not be in a position to do this for at least a month..

I informed M. Massigli that my instructions were to proceed to Rome. He said that if I did so I should have to make it clear that the last proposal for a settlement, if finally rejected by us, had been withdrawn by the French Government. In particular M. Massigli emphasised that there could be no question of France agreeing to *de facto* parity with Italy in 8-inch gun cruisers, except as part of an agreed settlement with us.

Finally M. Massigli deplored the effect on Anglo-French relations of the decision of His Majesty's Government. France had made a reduction of at least 16 per cent. on the programme which she had had in view for 1936 and it would be difficult for anyone in France to believe that an offer on such lines should cause concern to the British Government.

I asked M. Massigli whether I was to take what he said as representing the views of his Government. He thereupon left the room and consulted for some time with M. Briand.

On his return he said he had been authorised to say that the language he had held to me was entirely approved by M. Briand.

Lord Tyrrell is seeing M. Briand this afternoon.

### No. 283

*Lord Tyrrell (Paris) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received February 21)*

*No. 26 Telegraphic: by bag [A 1163/21/45]*

PARIS, February 20, 1931

Your letter<sup>1</sup> of February 19 and my immediately preceding telegram.<sup>2</sup>

2. I saw M. Briand this afternoon and thanked him in your name for all the efforts which he had made to obtain agreement. At the same time I expressed to him your great regret at your inability to accept the solution and stated your reasons.

3. M. Briand deeply regretted your inability to accept the agreement, because he had spent the whole of his influence in obtaining it. He feared very much the repercussion of refusal on (1) Anglo-French relations; (2) the prospects of the Disarmament Conference and (3) the relations between France and Italy. He was under the impression that the present agreement would have produced relations between the principal Powers of Europe, which would have been full of promise for the Disarmament Conference. He deeply regretted your decision and decided to write you a personal letter which he hoped would make clear his position and possibly persuade you to reconsider the situation.

<sup>1</sup> This letter cannot be traced in the Foreign Office Archives.

<sup>2</sup> No. 282.



4. All I can say is that if your present decision is maintained, the repercussion here will be most damaging to the prospects of the general Disarmament Conference. Your decision has left the French fogged: they simply do not understand it and if a Frenchman does not understand, he becomes suspicious.

5. So far M. Briand's confidence in you has been perfect; but I am bound to point out to you that if you fail to ratify this agreement it will not only mean that you have differed in opinion from him; it will mean that you will be thought to have allowed negotiations to be prolonged until you have got the last drop out of the French, and, having done so, to have decided that the last drop is not enough and that you must appeal to public opinion of the world to have the last say. If that were possible on the Continent, I should not hesitate to encourage you to attempt that test; but as far as this country is concerned in the matter of disarmament you will achieve more by co-operation with Briand than you will by any appeal to Caesar, or in other words, public opinion.

6. I should like to remind you of the practical successes that you have obtained by your co-operation with Briand, but I beg of you not to desert him at the present stage when he has made a most successful effort to secure co-operation for disarmament not only with France and England but also with Italy.

7. If the French Government are now anxious for this agreement it is not because of its technical advantages (for they have made many concessions) but because they are persuaded of its importance from the point of view of maintaining good relations between our two countries in the critical years ahead of us.

8. I understand that all that now stands between us and agreement is our own reluctance to retain some overage destroyers which would increase our total tonnage by 4 per cent.

## No. 284

*Letter from M. Briand to Mr. A. Henderson (Received February 22)*

[A 1175/21/45]

Mon cher Henderson,

PARIS, February 21, 1931

A l'heure où nous avons toutes les raisons de penser que les conversations engagées entre nos Experts allaient enfin aboutir à d'heureux résultats qu'un effort fait à Rome permettrait encore d'étendre, j'apprends que votre Gouvernement formule ses objections qui risquent de compromettre le travail accompli.

Alors que la coopération confiante de nos représentants a permis l'heureux achèvement des travaux de la Commission préparatoire du désarmement, alors que notre étroite collaboration personnelle a rendu possible le succès des dernières délibérations de Genève, amenant ainsi dans la situation internationale une salubre détente, il me paraît paradoxal que, dans une affaire

où les intérêts de nos deux pays ne devraient nullement se heurter, un désaccord s'élève entre Paris et Londres qui puisse rendre vain l'effort de compréhension mutuelle poursuivi depuis plusieurs mois et entraîner de nouvelles complications dans les relations franco-italiennes.

Vous connaissez la situation et M. Craigie vous a mis en possession des chiffres qui résulteraient de l'application des solutions sur lesquelles il est tombé d'accord avec mes experts.<sup>1</sup> Quelques faits s'en dégagent que je veux rappeler brièvement.

Sans parler des classes de bâtiments limitées par le traité de Washington dans les conditions que vous savez, je constate que, dans les trois classes sujettes à limitation aux termes du traité de Londres, il en était deux à propos desquelles, durant la Conférence, des difficultés s'étaient élevées entre nos deux délégations.

L'une était celle des grands croiseurs : sur ce point l'accord envisagé vous donne entière satisfaction.

L'autre était celle des sous-marins : les apaisements que vous obtenez ne sont pas moins importants. Dans cette classe en effet nous renonçons à toute construction autre que celle des deux grands sous-marins que le traité de Londres nous a expressement autorisés à mettre en chantier. Nous renonçons ainsi à remplacer 20.000 tonnes de bâtiments qui seront atteints par la limite d'âge d'ici le 31 décembre 1936. Votre Amirauté voudrait, paraît-il, que nous allions plus loin et, afin de ne pas dépasser le chiffre de 77,538 tonnes, que nous acceptions, de déclasser des bâtiments n'ayant pas atteint la limite d'âge. C'est une solution que ni le Parlement ni l'opinion française ne pourraient admettre.

Reste la classe des croiseurs légers et des destroyers, sur laquelle, jusqu'à présent, aucune difficulté n'avait surgi entre nous. Il eut été naturel que nous y cherchions de large compensations pour les concessions faites par ailleurs. Cependant nous accepterions de nous borner à ne faire que les constructions de remplacement, et la seule satisfaction qui nous est reconnue consiste à conserver des bâtiments légers hors d'âge au lieu de vieux croiseurs cuirassés près d'être inutilisables.

Tels sont les faits. Il s'agit de savoir si pour 5,000 tonnes de sous-marins et pour quelques milliers de tonnes de petits croiseurs et de destroyers ayant dépassé la limite d'âge, l'accord cherché avec tant de persévérance pendant une année entière va se révéler impossible. Je me refuse à le croire. Durant des mois, je me suis employé avec les experts à faire apprécier par les techniciens de notre Marine tous les aspects du problème international de la limitation des flottes. Nous avons trouvé auprès d'eux un esprit de très grande bonne volonté ; ils ont étudié et, finalement, proposé des programmes qui, par rapport à la flotte prévue dans le statut naval, comporte une réduction de 15 à 16 %, c'est-à-dire une réduction d'un ordre comparable à celle qui résulte pour la flotte Britannique, par rapport à ses provisions antérieures, au traité de Londres combiné avec le traité de Washington.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Craigie noted that on this point the letter was not entirely accurate, since he had pointed out that the French proposals as finally put forward would create difficulties.

J'ai conscience de ne pouvoir leur demander un nouvel effort; je manquerais d'ailleurs d'arguments: mon collègue de la Marine et moi ne pouvons aller plus loin, et je n'ignore pas d'autre part que si, en définitive, l'accord se révèle impossible sur les bases envisagées, les réductions consenties par les techniciens par rapport aux programmes antérieurs ne pourront pas être maintenues.

Je vous demande de bien peser la situation: d'un côté, si l'entente est réalisée, c'est une amélioration certaine des relations internationales et la possibilité de préparer dans une atmosphère confiante la conférence de 1932; de l'autre, c'est une reprise de la compétition navale entre la France et l'Italie, c'est l'aggravation des malentendus et de la méfiance dans la question du désarmement, ce sont, en un mot, des obstacles nouveaux sur la voie de la prochaine conférence; enfin, et cela me touche encore davantage à l'heure où la collaboration de nos deux pays est plus que jamais nécessaire dans l'intérêt de la paix du monde, c'est entre la Grande-Bretagne et la France le risque de nouvelles difficultés.

Voilà, mon cher Ami, très franchement exprimées mes vues sur la présente situation. Je souhaite qu'elles vous convainquent que le moment est venu pour que, du côté britannique, on fasse un geste, et pour que les gouvernements ne laissent pas mettre en péril le système sur lequel les experts au bout d'un an d'efforts sont enfin parvenus à s'accorder.

Croyez moi, etc.

A. BRIAND

No. 285

*Lord Tyrrell (Paris) to Sir R. Vansittart (Received February 25)*  
*No. 28 Telegraphic<sup>1</sup> [A 1253/21/45]*

PARIS, February 24, 1931

Addressed to Washington No. 1 and to Tokyo No. 1 of February 24.

Following from Secretary of State.

As a result of conversations which First Lord of the Admiralty and I have had in Paris<sup>2</sup> we have provisionally reached agreement on following points subject to concurrence of United States, Japanese and Italian Governments.

2. *Capital ships.* Without prejudice to a subsequent general revision of capital ship tonnages fixed by Treaty of Washington the total tonnage of capital ships which France and Italy may retain under Treaty of Washington to be raised from 175,000 tons to 181,000 tons. The purpose of this provision is to permit France to retain one capital ship of the *Jean Bart* class which she would otherwise be obliged to scrap on completion of her second new battle-cruiser. This should greatly facilitate an agreement with Italy because it

<sup>1</sup> This telegram is a repetition to the Foreign Office of a telegram sent by Mr. Henderson to Washington and Tokyo.

<sup>2</sup> In view of the reports from Lord Tyrrell and Mr. Craigie and of M. Briand's letter, Mr. Henderson and Mr. Alexander, with Mr. Craigie, went to Paris on February 23 to discuss the situation with the French Government. On February 24 they left Paris for Rome.

would enable present French superiority in capital ships to continue throughout period of agreement notwithstanding construction of new capital ships by France and Italy. While His Majesty's Government greatly regret the necessity for any increase however slight in capital ship tonnages agreed to at Washington they feel that if this arrangement would in fact facilitate a provisional settlement of immensely difficult Franco-Italian naval problem [that] this price should be reluctantly paid. You should express the earnest hope that Government to which you are accredited will be prepared to agree to this slight increase in defence of general settlement.

3. *Cruisers, destroyers and submarines.* The agreement proposed is on general lines of that under discussion between M. Massigli, Signor Rosso and Mr. Craigie at Geneva last December. The only modifications are that over age position would be changed by France keeping a greater over age in light surface craft category and a smaller quantity in first class cruisers and capital ship categories. The total of French over age would however remain approximately the same.

4. *Submarines.* No further construction other than for completion of the 1930 programme and for replacement of tonnage becoming over age after December 31, 1931. French Government was unable to accept a lower figure than that resulting from this formula (viz. 81,989 tons) but it agrees that question can be re-opened if whole naval question comes up for fresh discussion at Conference of 1932.

5. His Majesty's Government maintain that this figure is too high in relation to British destroyer figure of 150,000 tons under London naval treaty but they agree to notify other Powers under part III of Naval Treaty that they will not have recourse to Articles (*sic*) 21 of that treaty pending general revision of naval question mentioned above. Should it not be possible at 1932 Conference to arrive at a more satisfactory equilibrium between French submarine tonnage and British destroyer tonnage His Majesty's Government will retain their right to make such increase as they may judge necessary in British destroyers figure of 150,000 tons.

6. It was also agreed that a declaration on the following lines should be signed either by three Powers immediately interested or by the Five Powers signatories to London Naval Treaty: it is understood that present agreement establishes no permanent ratio in any category of ship as between British Empire, France and Italy and that in particular no precedent is being created for final solution of the question as to whether and in what manner, tonnage remaining over age on December 31st, 1936 may ultimately be replaced.

7. First Lord of the Admiralty and I are now leaving for Rome to put these proposals before Italian Government but I have thought it desirable to inform Government to which you are accredited officially of the position now reached in the hope that they will be prepared to secure an agreement on lines now contemplated. Please ask the Government to which you are accredited to let me have their views on this at the earliest possible moment and telegraph reply to me c/o His Majesty's Ambassador, Rome. You

should impress on them the necessity for absolute secrecy as any leakage at this stage may have the worst possible consequences.

**No. 286**

*Sir R. Lindsay (Washington), to Mr. A. Henderson (Received February 27)  
No. 134 Telegraphic [A 1315/21/45]*

WASHINGTON, February 26, 1931

My telegram No. 127.<sup>1</sup>

My immediately following telegram gives text of memorandum sent me today by Secretary of State.

Mr. Marriner explains that it is very tentative indeed especially penultimate sentence, but Secretary of State was anxious to send an encouraging message at first possible moment. Meanwhile State Department is considerably puzzled as to details of proposed arrangement. Especially as regards battleships, they cannot understand how retention of *Jean Bart* and construction of 2 new (? 23)000 ton ships can bring about an excess of 6,000 tons over Washington Treaty figure. The method they propose of proceeding by Franco-Italian declaration rather than by Franco-Italian adhesion to Part III is mainly intended to postpone as long as possible the question of revising Washington Treaty figures.

As regards submarines Mr. Marriner says Secretary of State in general looks very much askance at high French figure and in particular its inclusion in any treaty would cause the utmost difficulty in Senate especially as such inclusion would debar United States Government as well as His Majesty's Government from recourse to Article 21 which applies only to non-signatories. This is a further argument for procedure by Franco-Italian declaration and not by their adhesion to Part III.

Addressed to Foreign Office No. 134, repeated to Rome.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. In this telegram of February 25 Sir R. Lindsay reported that Mr. Marriner's reactions to the proposed terms of agreement 'seemed not unfavourable, though he was naturally non-committal'.

**No. 287**

*Sir R. Lindsay (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received February 27,  
1931)*

*No. 135 Telegraphic [A 1316/21/45]*

WASHINGTON, February 26, 1931

Following is text referred to in my immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>  
Begins:—

'I am much gratified at progress (? which) has been made and prospect of limitation upon both France and Italy in manner proposed. There is no

<sup>1</sup> No. 286.

doubt that such an arrangement would be very substantial contribution to achievement of London Treaty. But I think that great care and study must be given to procedure by which this arrangement is effectuated. While my views are necessarily tentative until we have full details of proposed arrangement my first impression is that it will be wiser, as well as easier, and equally satisfactory if arrangement is placed in form of joint declarations by France and Italy rather than by an attempt to include them in Five Power Treaty. This might make possible acceptance of France's battleship building programme by a declaration of no objection on the part of Washington Treaty Powers rather than by a formal amendment of Treaty. Any other course might entail serious delays and risks in ratification.' Ends.

Addressed to Foreign Office, repeated to Rome.

### No. 288

*Mr. Snow (Tokyo) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received February 27)*

*No. 27 Telegraphic [A 1317/21/45]*

TOKYO, February 27, 1931

Addressed to Rome No. 1.

Following for Secretary of State:—

I delivered substance of your telegram No. 1<sup>1</sup> from Paris (received yesterday) in written communication yesterday afternoon and after Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs had read it duly emphasized need for secrecy and your desire to receive a reply at Rome. He took careful note and promised to obtain Japanese Government's views. After mentioning delicate position of Government in regard to submarines he volunteered the statement that Japanese Government would not wish to stand in the way of agreement.

I shall see him again today.

Repeated to Foreign Office and Washington.

<sup>1</sup> No. 285.

### No. 289

*Sir R. Vansittart to Sir R. Lindsay (Washington)*

*Nos. 128 and 129 Telegraphic [A 1315/21/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, February 27, 1931

Your telegram No. 134<sup>1</sup> (of February 26: Franco-Italian naval discussions).

The explanation of the French desire to obtain a total capital ship tonnage of approximately 181,000 tons is as follows:—

At the Washington Conference maximum individual tonnage of battle-ships was fixed at 35,000 tons and France was granted a total tonnage in

<sup>1</sup> No. 286.

this category of vessel of 175,000 or five units of the maximum tonnage permitted. France, however, never agreed to limit the number of her capital ships to five and has always aimed at having eight of these vessels. At the present time she possesses six ships of this class totalling 133,134 tons, and she proposes to build between now and 1936 two new units of 23,333 tons each and eventually a third vessel of identical size, making in all a proposed *new* construction of 69,999 tons. By constructing two new vessels of the tonnage already stated the French capital ship strength will be increased by 46,666 tons to 179,800 tons (8 ships). This is 4,800 tons above the Washington maximum, and under the terms of that treaty France should scrap one of the *Jean Bart* class of 22,189 tons. If this action were taken on the completion of the second of the proposed new capital ships France's tonnage in this class would fall to 157,601 tons (seven ships) which, however, she wishes to avoid for the reasons given in Paris telegram No. 1 to you. She therefore wishes to retain the *Jean Bart* pending the completion of her *third* new capital ship, which will give a total strength of 8 vessels of 180,934 tons, or approximately 181,000 tons.

France holds that the size of the proposed three new ships cannot be reduced below 23,333 tons since this is the minimum considered necessary to deal adequately with the German *Ersatz Preussen* class.

Repeated to Rome Nos. 44 and 45.

#### No. 290

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Sir R. Vansittart (Received February 28)*

*No. 34 Telegraphic<sup>1</sup> [A 1352/21/45]*

ROME, February 28, 1931

Addressed to Washington No. 1.

Your telegram No. 134<sup>2</sup> addressed to Foreign Office and your telegram unnumbered<sup>3</sup> of February 26.

Following from Secretary of State.

I understand that both France and Italy would prefer accession to Part III of Treaty because of impression of solidarity between Naval Powers which this would produce. Personally, however, I agree with Stimson that it would be better to proceed by way of joint declarations especially if this would be more agreeable to United States Government. . . .<sup>4</sup> had been to have one protocol relating to modification of French and Italian tonnage under the Washington Treaty and another recording French and Italian accession to London Naval Treaty, but I will discuss (? matter)<sup>4</sup> with M. Briand on my return to Paris and feel sure we shall be able to fall in with United States' wishes in the matter.

<sup>1</sup> This telegram is a repetition to the Foreign Office of a telegram sent by Mr. Henderson to Sir R. Lindsay (Washington).

<sup>2</sup> No. 286.

<sup>3</sup> The reference here appears to be to No. 287.

<sup>4</sup> The text here is uncertain.

As regards French submarine figure I share Stimson's concern that it should be so high but we have reduced it to lowest point possible for the moment. We are proposing to reserve our rights under Article I (? therefore)<sup>1</sup> in case it should not be possible to reduce this figure at 1932 Conference and United States can of course do the same if it desires.

<sup>1</sup> Article I should read Article XXI.

## No. 291

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Sir R. Vansittart (Received February 28)*  
*No. 37 Telegraphic [A 1365/21/45]*

ROME, February 28, 1931

Following for Prime Minister from Secretary of State.

We have reached agreement in principle and are proceeding to Paris to submit it to the French Government.

We are leaving here this afternoon to report to the French on Sunday<sup>1</sup> and arrive London Monday afternoon.

<sup>1</sup> March 1. On the evening of March 1 a press communiqué was issued in Paris to the effect that, after Mr. Henderson and Mr. Alexander had explained the results of their conversations held in Rome, Mr. Henderson and M. Briand had telegraphed to Signor Grandi their entire agreement with the proposed terms of settlement and their willingness to recommend these terms for the approval of the French Government and of other Governments concerned. On March 2 Signor Grandi telegraphed his 'special thanks' to Mr. Henderson and to His Majesty's Government for their 'very valuable assistance in arriving at the agreement'.

## No. 292

*Mr. Snow (Tokyo) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received February 28, 1931)*  
*No. 32 Telegraphic<sup>1</sup> [A 1353/21/45]*

TOKYO, February 28, 1931

Addressed to Rome No. 3 of February 28.

Following for Secretary of State.

My telegram No. 1.<sup>2</sup>

Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me this afternoon that Minister for Foreign Affairs is still in discussion with Minister of Marine. Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs doubted whether Japanese Government would be in a position to formulate their views before you left Rome.<sup>3</sup>

While (? delicacy of)<sup>4</sup> framing statement as to submarine proposals is apparent, French request for additional 6,000 tons under Washington Treaty was described to me by Vice Minister as 'very modest'.

Repeated to Foreign Office.

<sup>1</sup> This telegram is a repetition to the Foreign Office of a telegram sent to Mr. Henderson in Rome.

<sup>2</sup> No. 288.

<sup>3</sup> On March 4 Mr. Snow telegraphed that on the previous afternoon the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs 'indicated that the Japanese reply would be satisfactory'.

<sup>4</sup> The text is here uncertain.



No. 293

*Sir R. Lindsay (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received March 3)*  
*No. 147 Telegraphic [A 1411/21/45]*

WASHINGTON, March 2, 1931

Secretary of State sent for me today.

He had seen a report originating from 'Matin' to the effect that new naval agreement just completed contemplates a reduction of maximum size of battleships. He was quite aware that report might be baseless but having at the end of last week consulted with other members of American delegation to London felt impelled at once to put in a warning that no such scheme can be regarded here as a matter of practical politics and to express his own and their hope that if it is contemplated consent of United States Government thereto will not be asked for.

Members of delegation individually cordially welcomed agreement so far as its terms are known here feeling that anything acceptable to His Majesty's Government should in substance be agreeable to United States Government but they strongly shared views of Secretary of State as to procedure (see my telegram No. 135<sup>1</sup>) hoping that agreement might be in the form of declaration between two or three Powers concerned in negotiation and that any ratification by Senate of an amendment to Washington Treaty might thus be postponed until it became a practical necessity. Telegrams from United States Embassies in Paris and Rome make Secretary of State confident that this requirement is being met.

<sup>1</sup> No. 287.

No. 294

*Mr. A. Henderson to Lord Tyrrell (Paris) and Sir R. Graham (Rome)*  
*No. 33<sup>1</sup> Telegraphic [A 1446/21/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, March 3, 1931

The following telegram<sup>2</sup> has been sent direct to M. Laval/Signor Mussolini by the Prime Minister:—

'I want to take an early opportunity to inform you of my great gratification on learning that the problems left over by the London Naval Conference have at length been settled by the agreement resulting from Mr. Henderson's and Mr. Alexander's Mission, subject of course to the concurrence of the other Governments represented at the Conference.

'I consider the result of these long negotiations to be happy augury for the settlement of the problems which will confront the General Disarmament Conference in 1932. This agreement, if finally reached, will set the seal upon the friendly relations between the British Commonwealth of Nations on the one hand and the four countries with which such cordial collaboration was established during the London Naval Conference.'

'A similar telegram has been addressed to Signor Mussolini/M. Laval.'

<sup>1</sup> To Paris; No. 47 to Rome.

<sup>2</sup> This telegram was published in the press on March 4.

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir R. Lindsay (Washington) and Mr. Snow (Tokyo)*  
*No. 139<sup>1</sup> Telegraphic [A 1456/21/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 4, 1931*

My telegram from Paris of March 1.<sup>2</sup>

My immediately following telegram contains the text<sup>3</sup> of the basis of agreement with reference to the problems left outstanding by the London Naval Conference. This is still subject to minor drafting amendments.

In communicating this very confidentially to the Secretary of State/Minister for Foreign Affairs you should say that throughout our negotiations it has been recognised on all sides that our acceptance of any settlement is of course subject to the assent of the other signatories of the London Naval Treaty.

Our view is that the figure of 81,989 tons for French submarines is extremely high, but we hope that a more satisfactory settlement of the submarine question may be possible during the World Disarmament Conference at Geneva. In case we are unable substantially to improve on the present position in respect of the proposed figure for submarine tonnage we have to reserve our full rights to increase our destroyer figure under Article 21 of the London Naval Treaty.

I regret that an increase, however small, should have been necessary in the French and Italian capital ship tonnages fixed by the Treaty of Washington, but it will be seen that this increase will not give rise to any new construction during the period of the treaty and will merely operate to enable France to retain an existing overage capital ship which she might otherwise have been obliged to scrap on the completion of her second capital ship. Moreover, the increase is agreed to without prejudice to any general scaling down of capital ship levels which may be brought about at later conferences.

There is no truth in the report that the new naval agreement contemplates a general reduction of the maximum size of battleships. It is proposed, however, that His Majesty's Government should inform both the French and Italian Governments in a separate communication that they continue to favour, so far as they are concerned, a reduction in the maximum displacement of capital ships fixed by the Treaty of Washington, and also the reduction of the maximum gun calibre to 12 inches.

I propose that the agreement should be recorded in the form of separate declarations and the actual form which these shall take is now being studied. I do not anticipate that the French and Italian Governments will raise any difficulty on this point.

Please inform Mr. Stimson/Minister for Foreign Affairs of the above and say that I shall be happy to furnish him at once with any further explanations of which he may stand in need. We are particularly anxious that this information should be regarded as strictly confidential until the assent of all

<sup>1</sup> To Washington; No. 28 to Tokyo.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed.

<sup>3</sup> For this text see No. 299.

the Governments parties to the London Naval Treaty has been obtained. I trust that, in view of the great political advantages which may be expected to follow upon the conclusion of the proposed agreement, the United States/Japanese Government will see their way to concur in the agreement which has emerged from many months of difficult negotiation. It would be particularly agreeable to His Majesty's Government if it were possible to announce the terms on Monday, March 9 next by agreement with all the other signatories.

No. 296

*Sir R. Graham (Rome) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received March 6)*

*No. 43 Telegraphic [C 1481/1230/22]*

ROME, March 6, 1931

I saw Minister for Foreign Affairs last night and after reviewing happy results achieved in naval agreement our conversation turned to desirability of pursuing Franco-Italian negotiations on other outstanding questions. There is the advantage of striking while the iron is hot. There is the disadvantage that any signal failure to come to terms on African questions may tend to destroy much improved atmosphere now prevailing and constitute a set back. French Ambassador broached the subject with Signor Grandi soon after your departure and is leaving for Paris tomorrow in order to sound the French Government and to obtain more precise instructions as to their attitude in regard to Tunis and Libya.<sup>1</sup>

Addressed to Foreign Office; repeated to Paris No. 4.

<sup>1</sup> In a despatch giving a more detailed account of this interview and of the reaction of Italian opinion to the naval agreement, Sir R. Graham reported that, according to Signor Grandi, the question of the Libyan frontier would be settled without much difficulty. The question of Tunis was less easy, but would 'settle itself if only a space of years were granted'. The Italian Government aimed at reducing the number of Italians in Tunisia and wished to transfer the best colonists to Tripoli. As a result of this policy 'Italian feeling would eventually become resigned to the absorption of the remaining Italians (in Tunisia) by France'.

No. 297

*Sir R. Lindsay (Washington) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received March 7)*

*No. 163 Telegraphic [A 1575/21/45]*

WASHINGTON, March 6, 1931

Your telegram No. 139.<sup>1</sup>

I have received following communication from Secretary of State. Begins.

'I have received your note of March 4 with annexed memorandum containing the tentative text of agreement which has been recently reached between Great Britain, France and Italy. I shall await final text with much interest. As I have already tried to make it clear to your Government in my previous communications to you I think final success of agreement which Messrs. Henderson, Alexander and Craigie have brought so successfully to

<sup>1</sup> No. 295.

this stage will depend very largely on form and method in which it is consummated and finally submitted to the five Powers. The more I have considered it and discussed it with representatives of my Government the more clear it seems to me that in every respect except one . . .<sup>2</sup> this new agreement should be solely an agreement between, or declaration by, Great Britain, France and Italy which those three Powers have made between themselves respecting levels of armaments of their auxiliary vessels, which agreement when finally attained between those three is merely presented to the other two, the United States and Japan, for their notation and information. If instead of this the United States were asked to become a (? party)<sup>2</sup> to an agreement which was to be made an integral part of London Naval Treaty, part three, by which the United States formally agreed that France should have 81,000 tons of submarines and the United States only 52,000 tons, I can see an endless vista of delay and discussion before United States Senate. Whereas, on the other hand if it were presented to United States as an arrangement solely between France and Italy, and possibly Great Britain, on which we were not called on to pass . . .<sup>2</sup> but which had great advantage of bringing about a practical restriction upon France and Italy (even though a high one) which does not now exist at all, it would be regarded here as truly in the light of a great advantage over *status quo*.

The only provision in the whole arrangement which may require a formal agreement between all five naval Powers is provision permitting a possible extension of capital ship allowance to France and Italy from 175,000 tons to 181,000 tons.

This extension of figures of Washington Treaty, however, is so slight at the most and will not come into force until so near the termination of London Treaty that I think it will not offer serious difficulty. I am now inclined to think that this feature could best be effected by an exchange of notes between the five Governments, which in our case will probably be submitted to our Senate.

If entire arrangement could follow the form which I have outlined above, namely, an agreement or joint declarations on part of two Powers as to auxiliary craft, which would simply be brought to the attention of other three Powers, and an exchange of notes between five Powers as to slight alteration of Washington Treaty in respect to limit of battleship tonnage for France and Italy, I feel that this whole arrangement would stand in its best possible light before people of all five countries and would win the immediate general approval which it deserves.

The form of this arrangement is of such importance I am seeking to expedite the labours of draftsmanship which you tell me are now going on in London by frankly advising you of my views beforehand. If final form when completed follows approximately this line, there will be a minimum of delay in giving you my final acceptance of it, and I am encouraged by what you have previously told me to the effect that my views are in general accord with those of Mr. Henderson.'

<sup>2</sup> The text here is uncertain.

No. 298

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir R. Lindsay (Washington)*

*No. 169 Telegraphic [A 1575/21/45]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 10, 1931*

Your telegram No. 163.<sup>1</sup>

Please convey my thanks to the Secretary of State for his communication.

You should inform him that his views as to the form in which the agreements should be cast accord very closely with my own, and I believe with those of the French and Italian Governments.

It is not proposed to make more than a verbal change in the 'Bases of Agreement' before publication on Wednesday and any announcement as to the form in which the agreement should be cast can well be left to a later stage.

I hope therefore it may be possible to announce at an early date that the United States Government agree to the proposed 'Bases of Agreement' subject to a satisfactory settlement of questions of form.

It seems plain to us that in order to settle the form and contents of the documents in which the 'Bases of Agreement' will be embodied, it will be necessary to convoke a drafting Committee, probably in London. In view of our great desire that these questions should be settled in a manner satisfactory to the United States Government, we much hope that they will be prepared to be represented on this Committee. Japanese Government would also no doubt wish to be represented.

<sup>1</sup> No. 297.

No. 299

*Memorandum on the Results of the Negotiations with France and Italy for the Reduction and Limitation of Naval Armaments, February–March 1931<sup>1</sup>*

Upon the conclusion of the London Naval Treaty the Naval Conference adjourned on the 15th April, 1930,<sup>2</sup> to allow further time for negotiations between the French and Italian Governments with a view to the settlement of the difficulties which stood in the way of complete agreement. Accordingly, at the instance of the Governments concerned, conversations were resumed between experts in the autumn of this year, and subsequently United Kingdom experts took part in the discussions, which were actively continued through the winter. In February the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the First Lord of the Admiralty visited Paris and Rome, and as a result of their negotiations with the French and Italian Governments complete agreement on all points was announced on the 1st March. The terms of the settlement were expressly made dependent on the approval of all the signatories of the London Naval Treaty.

<sup>1</sup> This memorandum was published as Cmd. 3812.

<sup>2</sup> The formal adjournment of the Conference took place on April 22, 1930.

The bases of the agreement arrived at are printed in the annex to this paper.

1. *Capital Ships.* The slight increase proposed in the total tonnage, accorded to France and Italy under the Treaty of Washington, will not in itself give rise to any new construction during the period of the agreement. The position may be explained as follows:—

By the Washington Treaty France was allowed to retain 208,114 tons of capital ships, including three old vessels of a total tonnage of 52,791 tons. Of this total 155,323 tons were replaceable by new construction which might total 175,000 tons, an increase of 19,677 tons. The three old ships were not included in the replacement calculations and could be retained indefinitely in excess of the 175,000 tons.

By the loss of the *France* the French total existing replaceable tonnage was reduced to 133,134, so that France was brought to the position of being able to build ships to the tonnage of 41,866 without any scrapping.

By the London Treaty France was precluded from building more than 70,000 tons of replacement capital ships. Wishing to build three ships out of this allowance she has designed to construct ships of 23,333 tons each, and by building two such ships she would exceed her right to build without scrapping by 4,800 tons. If she built a third ship of this tonnage she would exceed that right by 28,133 tons and if she scrapped one of her existing replaceable ships she would exceed it by 5,944. If on the other hand France were to scrap two ships she would, owing to the provisions of Article 1 of the London Naval Treaty, be precluded from reaching her full allowance of tonnage by as much as 16,245 tons.

Hence the necessity in fairness for increasing the tonnage allowance by 6,000 tons to 181,000.

In return for this concession France undertakes to scrap by December 1936 two of the three old battleships referred to above as not replaceable.

Further, the French and Italian Governments will reduce the calibre of the gun on their projected capital ships from 13 inches to 12 inches and His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom will give the French Government a written assurance that they themselves favour a gun of a maximum calibre of 12 inches and a reduction in the existing maximum displacement of 35,000 tons.

2. *6-inch-gun Cruisers.* It is anticipated that the French Government will in 1936 possess a large over-age tonnage in this category. It was made clear during the negotiations that the temporary retention of this tonnage conferred on France no claim to its ultimate replacement, and the reservation under this head in paragraph C (b) of the Bases of Agreement fully safeguards the position.

It will be observed that an extension of the life for destroyers has been provided for in paragraph B (b) of the Bases of Agreement. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have always considered the normal effective life of destroyers to be not less than sixteen years, and the twelve-year life for destroyers was only adopted in the London Naval Treaty to suit the convenience of other signatories.

3. *Submarines*.—France has 81,989 tons of submarines, built and building, which will be under-age on the 31st December of this year, and the French Government are unwilling to rest on a lower figure. Both the French and Italian Governments have, however, agreed not to include any submarines in the 1931 programme and not to lay down any further submarine tonnage before 1933.

The question will be before the World Disarmament Conference in 1932, but, in order to take account of the contingency that a satisfactory solution of the submarine problem may not prove possible in 1932, the right of the Members of the British Commonwealth of Nations to increase their destroyer figure under article 21 of the London Naval Treaty is fully reserved in paragraph B (c) of the Bases of Agreement.

Finally, the French and Italian Governments recognise the provisions of Part III of the London Naval Treaty, in so far as they apply to the Members of the British Commonwealth of Nations, the United States of America and Japan, and accept, in so far as they are concerned, those provisions which are of general application and which do not conflict with the terms of the present arrangement.

ARTHUR HENDERSON.

A. V. ALEXANDER.

March 11, 1931.

## ANNEX

### BASES OF AGREEMENT

(March 1, 1931.)

#### A. *Vessels whose Tonnage is Regulated by the Treaty of Washington*

##### I. *Capital Ships*

(a) Before the 31st December, 1936, France and Italy may respectively complete two capital ships, the displacement of each of which will not exceed 23,333 tons and the gun calibre of which will not exceed 12 inches.

(b) On completion of each of these ships, France will scrap one ship of the *Diderot* class; similarly, Italy will scrap approximately 16,820 tons of first-class over-age cruisers (making a total of 33,640 tons).

(c) Without prejudice to a general revision of the capital-ship tonnages established by the Treaty of Washington, and in order to facilitate the conclusion of the present arrangement, the total tonnage in this category accorded to France and Italy respectively under the treaty shall be raised from 175,000 tons to 181,000 tons.

##### II. *Aircraft Carriers*

Before the 31st December, 1936, France and Italy may complete respectively 34,000 tons of aircraft carriers.

*Note to I and II.* The French and Italian Governments will give one another as long notice as possible of their intention to seek parliamentary authority for the construction of any ships in either of these two categories.

The above provisions will be included in an exchange of letters between the Ministers of Marine of France and Italy, except the provision contained in paragraph I (c) which will form the subject of a special protocol or declaration.

*B. Vessels whose Tonnage is Regulated by the Treaty of London*

France and Italy will conform to the following rules in preparing their programmes for construction to be completed before the 31st December, 1936:—

*(a) Cruisers with Guns of more than 6.1-inch (155 m/m) Calibre*

No further construction after completion of the 1930 programme.

*(b) Cruisers with Guns of 6.1-inch (155 m/m) Calibre or less and Destroyers*

The tonnage of new construction to be completed shall not exceed the tonnage which is replaceable in this category before the 31st December, 1936. Vessels already over-age and vessels becoming over-age during the period of the treaty shall be scrapped on being replaced, except in cases where either France or Italy prefers to scrap instead an equivalent tonnage belonging to the category of cruisers with guns of more than 6.1 inch (155 m/m) calibre.<sup>1</sup>

It is hereby declared that for the purpose of this arrangement the Members of the British Commonwealth of Nations, France and Italy do not intend to undertake the replacement before the 31st December, 1936, of any destroyer which will be under sixteen years of age on that date. At the same time it is understood that if the present agreement is brought to an end as a result of the deliberations of the General Disarmament Conference of 1932, the right of replacement under the replacement rules of the London Naval Treaty remains intact.

*(c) Submarines*

No further construction other than for completion of the 1930 programme and for the replacement of tonnage becoming over-age after the 31st December, 1931. Over-age vessels shall be scrapped, except where scrapping would result in the total submarine tonnage figure falling below the submarine figure mentioned in article 16 of the Treaty of London.

Subject to a general revision of the naval question in the course of the Disarmament Conference of 1932, the tonnage of French submarines in commission will not exceed, up to the 31st December, 1936, the figure of 81,989 tons, representing at the present moment the under-age tonnage of vessels built or building. The Members of the British Commonwealth of

<sup>1</sup> (*Note in original text.*) It is suggested that, for the sake of clarity, this sentence should be re-drafted as follows after the words 'on being replaced':—

'Nevertheless, subject to the engagements mentioned in paragraph I (b), France and Italy may scrap, instead of over-age light surface vessels, a tonnage of cruisers with guns of more than 6.1 inch (155 m/m), equivalent to the total of the new units completed.'



Nations maintain that this figure of 81,989 tons is too high in relation to their destroyer figure of 150,000 tons under the London Naval Treaty, but they agree to notify the other signatories of Part III of the Treaty of London that they will not have recourse to article 21 of the London Treaty pending the general revision of the naval question mentioned above. Should it not be possible at the 1932 conference to arrive at a satisfactory equilibrium between French submarine tonnage and British Commonwealth destroyer tonnage, the Members of the British Commonwealth of Nations will retain their right to make such increase as they may judge necessary in their destroyer figure of 150,000 tons.

### *C. General Provisions*

(a) France and Italy furthermore declare (1) that they will accept all the provisions of Part III of the London Naval Treaty in so far as it applies to the Members of the British Commonwealth of Nations, the United States of America and Japan; (2) that they will accept, in so far as they are concerned, those provisions which are of general application and which do not conflict with the provisions of the present arrangement.

(b) At the time of the signature of this arrangement a declaration in the following sense would be signed either by the Members of the British Commonwealth of Nations, France and Italy, or else by all the parties to the London Treaty:—

It is understood that the present arrangement establishes no permanent ratio in any category of ship as between the Members of the British Commonwealth of Nations, France and Italy. In particular, no precedent is being created for the final solution of the question whether, and if so in what manner, tonnage remaining over-age on the 31st December, 1936, may ultimately be replaced.

## CHAPTER VI

# Relations with Germany from the formation of Dr. Brüning's administration to the announcement of the Austro-German proposals for a Customs Union (March 28, 1930–March 21, 1931)

No. 300

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received March 31)*

*No. 230 [C 2480/140/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, March 28, 1930

Although the political storm has been gathering for some days past, probably few people expected it to break last night, having regard especially to the general recognition of the fact that certain financial legislation had to be passed before the 1st April. It was also difficult to see how a new Government could ensure the passage of that legislation without advising the President to enact it by means of paragraph 48 of the Constitution. Germans generally have been so accustomed to eleventh-hour crises that I think most people expected that the squabbling parties of the Coalition would, nevertheless, end by finding some solution of the method of financing the unemployment insurance question which could be accepted by all of them. Dr. Brüning, of the Centre party, had proposed a solution which had been accepted by his own party, the People's and Democrat parties, but it foundered on the opposition of the Social Democratic party, although the members of that party represented in the Government, with the exception of the Minister of Labour, were all prepared to accept it.

2. In company with several of my colleagues, I happened to be dining with General Groener, the Reichswehr Minister, last night. He greeted us with the announcement that he was no longer in office, the Government having resigned half an hour previously. Incidentally, I may mention that it is unlikely that the position of General Groener, who stands outside party politics, will be affected by the resignation of the Müller Cabinet. Both General Groener and Herr Weismann, the Prussian Secretary of State, who was present at the dinner and who, as I have already mentioned, is liaison Minister between the Reich and the Prussian Cabinets, stated quite definitely that Dr. Brüning, of the Centre party, would be sent for by the President and entrusted with the formation of the new Government.<sup>1</sup> They went so far, in fact, as to say that this step had been arranged beforehand in the possible event of the resignation of the Müller Cabinet. The new Government would be based on a coalition including the Treviranus group of

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Brüning formed an administration on March 30, 1930.

Nationalists, the People's party, Centre and Democrats. These parties, together with the smaller parties such as the Bavarian Volkspartei, Economic party and Christian Peasants' party could count on 197 supporters out of a total Reichstag of 491 members. It will be seen that the new Government which is foreshadowed is more to the Right, and one of the most interesting features of the present crisis is that a Government of that complexion should come into being so quickly. A Government such as anticipated might also count on the support of the moderate Nationalists, even including Count Westarp, though in that event it might be exposed to the criticism of holding office with the consent of Herr Hugenberg unless there was a further split in the Nationalist party. There have been signs for some time past that attempts would be made to constitute a *bloc* of *bourgeois* parties independent of the Social Democratic party, though it is doubtful whether, in the long run, the Government of this country can be carried on without the support of the Social Democrats. For this reason it appears unlikely that the new Government will last for any length of time. The Müller Coalition Cabinet has been in power for a year and nine months, and although the ostensible cause of its fall is a difference of opinion in the ranks of its supporters regarding the rate of the contribution to the unemployment insurance fund, it has been evident for some time past that the parties forming the Government Coalition have found increasing difficulty in working together. In other words, the crisis which it was foreseen might occur after the passage of the Young plan legislation has occurred.

3. Only three more days remain before the 1st April in which to pass the necessary financial legislation, and it is difficult to see how that legislation can be passed without recourse by the President to paragraph 48 of the Constitution, a proceeding which would have been very distasteful to the Social Democrats had they remained in office.

4. The Ministers with whom I had an opportunity of talking last night were confident that the new Government would be formed by this evening or at latest by to-morrow. Herr Weismann said that he thought it quite possible that Dr. Schacht would be asked to take charge of the Ministry of Finance. On the other hand, he was very emphatic in considering that Dr. Curtius would not continue at the Foreign Office owing to his unpopularity with his own party, though that view is not quite borne out by the proceedings at the recent convention of the People's party at Mannheim.

5. Two facts emerge from the recent political happenings in Germany. The first is that there does not appear to be a single strong and dominant personality in any of the political parties. The Chancellor is handicapped by indifferent health, but had he been a Stresemann he would surely have been able to bring his party into line at the last minute over the question of unemployment insurance. The other fact is the increased prestige and authority of the President. Some observers thought that the Field-Marshal had exceeded his constitutional powers when, after signing the Polish Liquidation Agreement,<sup>1</sup> he openly directed the Government to devise

<sup>1</sup> This agreement, which was signed on October 31, 1929, provided for the mutual

measures for the relief of East Prussia. When, however, some three days later the Government published detailed measures for the relief of East Prussia, it was obvious to everybody that there had been concerted action in the matter between the President and his Government. The result of the present crisis will probably be still further to increase the reliance of Germans of all shades of political opinion on the President's ability to steer the country through difficult times.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

No. 301

*Mr. A. Henderson to Lord Tyrrell (Paris)*

*No. 882 [C 3211/16/18]*

My Lord,

FOREIGN OFFICE, *April 28, 1930*

The unforeseen delays which have occurred in bringing into force the Hague agreements make me anxious regarding the completion of the evacuation of the Rhineland which, as Your Lordship is aware, is to be completed 'at the latest in a period of eight months (from the putting into force of the Young Plan) terminating not later than the end of June 1930'.<sup>1</sup>

2. While I have no desire to enter into a discussion of possible legal interpretations of this somewhat ambiguous phrase in the exchange of notes of August 30 last, it will be within your knowledge that the German Government has for some time past counted definitely on the final evacuation taking place on June 30 next. The German Government may possibly argue that neither the delay in summoning the second Hague Conference nor the present delay in putting the agreements into effect have been the result of any action or omission on their part and that, whatever may be the strict legal interpretation of the phrase quoted, they are morally entitled to expect that the date of June 30 should be adhered to. I feel that any failure to settlement of claims arising out of the liquidation by the Polish Government of property belonging to the German minority in Poland.

<sup>1</sup> This phrase occurred in the English text of the Joint Note addressed by the Representatives of the Occupying Powers to Dr. Stresemann at The Hague on August 30, 1929. In the English translation of Dr. Stresemann's reply of the same date the phrase used is 'at the latest within a period of eight months, which, however, may not extend beyond the end of June, 1930'.

The withdrawal of the British force of occupation had been completed, according to plan, on December 12, 1929, and on this date the second zone of occupation was evacuated. According to the Joint Note of August 30, 1929, the evacuation of the third zone would begin 'immediately after' the Young Plan had been ratified by the German and French Parliaments and put into operation. The arrangements for carrying out the Young Plan were approved at the sessions of the Conference of The Hague, January 3-20, 1930. On March 12, 1930, the Reichstag approved measures embodying the Young Plan and the agreements reached at The Hague. The German ratification of these agreements was received in Paris on March 26, 1930. The agreements were then ratified in Great Britain, France, and Italy. On May 17, 1930, the Reparation Commission declared that the Young Plan would take effect from that date, and, on the same day, the French Government announced that the evacuation of the third zone would begin at once. The evacuation was completed within the agreed time-limit.

adhere to this date will cause in Germany a feeling of disappointment all the more bitter in that it is not at present anticipated; and while the resultant outburst of feeling will be mainly directed against France, there is a distinct danger that it may have wider repercussions and make more difficult the smooth and loyal execution of the Young Plan.

3. His Majesty's Government cannot therefore remain indifferent to the unfortunate and dangerous consequences which they anticipate as the result of any failure to complete the evacuation of the Rhineland by June 30. I shall be glad if you will take an early opportunity, in frank and friendly conversation with M. Briand, of ascertaining what steps have been and are being taken by the French Military authorities to carry out the evacuation in the shortest possible space of time once the ratifications of the Hague Agreement are completed; whether for instance the French Government contemplate speeding up the preparatory measures once they have deposited their own ratification, and generally whether the object which they are aiming at still is that evacuation should be completed by June 30.

4. You should leave His Excellency under no misapprehension as to the importance which His Majesty's Government attach, in the interests of international appeasement, to the carrying out of the original intention to complete the evacuation by June 30 next.

5. A memorandum on the present situation as it appears here is enclosed<sup>2</sup> for your information and guidance.

I am, &c.

ARTHUR HENDERSON

<sup>2</sup> Not printed.

### No. 302

*Lord Tyrrell (Paris) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received May 1)*

*No. 466 [C 3347/16/18]*

Sir,

PARIS, April 30, 1930

I have not yet been able to take up the question of the date of the final evacuation of the Rhineland, as directed in your despatch No. 882 of April 28.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime I hasten to report to you the following information, obtained by the Military Attaché to this Embassy, which will be of some interest to you.

2. The French Government have not yet given instructions to the general staff as to the actual date on which the evacuation of the Rhineland is to be completed. All the regiments and similar formations still in the third zone of the Rhineland have however sent battalions or equivalent units to prepare their cantonments for occupation on evacuation and can be moved thereto without difficulty or delay. Colonel Needham estimates that evacuation could be completed within one month of the issue of final instructions to that effect.

I have, &c.

TYRRELL

<sup>1</sup> No. 301.

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received May 5)*

*No. 347 [C 3425/16/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, *May 2, 1930*

In paragraph 2 of your despatch addressed to His Majesty's Ambassador at Paris, No. 882 of April 28th I observe that you mention that any failure to adhere to the date fixed for the evacuation of the Rhineland would cause a feeling of disappointment in Germany, all the more bitter in that any such delay is not at present anticipated in this country. I am somewhat perturbed to gather from your despatch that there is even a possibility, however faint, of delay in completing the evacuation. Not only is such delay, as you say, not anticipated in Germany but it is confidently expected by the public at large that the creditor Powers will observe most scrupulously the undertaking set out in the Hague Agreement of the 30th August, 1929.

2. It was on this understanding that the Government were able to pilot, not only the measures embodying the Young Plan itself but a number of unpopular ancillary measures, such as the various liquidation agreements, through the Reichstag with complete success. It was largely on the same ground that the political parties have recently imposed unpopular additional taxes on the community in order that the equilibrium of the budget might be maintained and that this essential pre-condition for the fulfilment of her reparations obligations might be satisfied by Germany. The merest hint that a hitch might occur and that the evacuation of the Rhineland might not be completed by the 30th of June would have sufficed to jeopardise the passage of the liquidation measures, if not of the Young Plan itself and would undoubtedly have overthrown the Brüning Cabinet during the recent fiscal debate. Even now any such suggestion might precipitate a political crisis, the consequences of which could only be the stirring up of all the old hatreds and bitterness.

3. In the German press, though mention has been made of the preparations to celebrate the evacuation, and the visit of the Reichspräsident to the Rhineland, there has been no reference to the date of evacuation for some time past. This I believe to be not only because the Germans naturally do not wish to raise the issue but also because German opinion now feels that reliance can be placed not only on the undertakings of the creditor Powers as a body, but even on the good faith of the French Government, once France has pledged her word. This in itself constitutes, to my mind, an important advance in the general interest of international relations and I can hardly imagine that the French Government would sacrifice this confidence on any frivolous pretext. There has been no change in the forthcoming attitude of the French Government *vis-à-vis* of this country, so far as I am in a position to observe that attitude here. The French Embassy in Berlin continue as before to make a parade of cordial relations, not only with literary and artistic, but with political and official circles here. This en-

courages me to think that official French policy has not altered for the worse and that the date fixed for evacuation will be observed.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

No. 304

*Mr. A. Henderson to Mr. R. H. Campbell (Paris)*

*No. 940 [C 3347/16/18]*

Sir,

FOREIGN OFFICE, *May 5, 1930*

I have received Lord Tyrrell's despatch No. 466<sup>1</sup> of the 30th. ultimo, and note that in the view of the Military Attaché the evacuation of the Rhineland by the French troops could be completed in about one month from the issue of final instructions.

2. I presume that you will report further when you have had an opportunity of speaking to M. Briand in the sense of my despatch No. 882 of the 28th. ultimo.<sup>2</sup>

I have, &c.

ARTHUR HENDERSON

<sup>1</sup> No. 301.

<sup>2</sup> In reply Lord Tyrrell considered that any action in the matter should be taken by Mr. Henderson in conversation with M. Briand. Mr. Henderson raised the question with M. Briand in Paris on May 9 and received from him satisfactory assurances that the evacuation would be completed within the time-limit.

No. 305

*Note by H.M. Military Attaché, Berlin<sup>1</sup>*

*[C 3872/140/18]*

BERLIN, *May 8, 1930*

Last week Colonel Kühlenthal of the Reichswehr Ministry was dining at my house and talked to me at length about the National Socialist Movement in Germany; the following is the gist of his remarks:

The National-Socialist movement is a real danger, and far more of a menace to the present constitution than is Communism. The trouble about the 'Brown Shirts' is that their principles and theories are entirely *destructive*. They wish to destroy the present fabric of the State, but have no constructive programme with which to replace it, except a form of mad-dog dictatorship. The movement is, therefore, in the long run far more akin to Bolshevism than to Fascism. Unfortunately the general discontent with the late Government, the Young Plan, etc. had turned the heads of a number of young officers towards the National Socialist movement as a means of escape from Germany's financial and political troubles.

<sup>1</sup> This note was transmitted to the Foreign Office by Sir H. Rumbold on May 13, 1930.

Another serious feature of the movement is the ascendancy which its leader, Adolf Hitler, has the power of exerting. He is a marvellous orator, and possesses an extraordinary gift for hypnotizing his audience and gaining adherents. Even though his policy is a negative one, his personal magnetism is such as to win over quite reasonable people to his standard, and it is this which constitutes the chief danger of the movement.

J. H. MARSHALL-CORNWALL  
Colonel, G.S., Military Attaché

No. 306

*Lord Tyrrell (Paris) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received July 4)*

*No. 761 [C 5354/16/18]*

Sir,

PARIS, July 3, 1930

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith copies of a telegram addressed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to M. Paul Tirard, the French representative on the Rhineland High Commission, on the completion of the evacuation.

2. You will note the passage in which M. Briand states that 'if France was firm in the defence of her rights, she intended nevertheless to be faithful to her desire to create with her former enemies the atmosphere of practical co-operation and moral understanding indispensable to the maintenance of peace.' In its leading article of the 1st July the 'Temps' observes that in these words is said all that it is necessary to say at a moment 'when France, by agreeing to evacuation in advance of the treaty dates and in carrying it out at the time agreed despite delays—which were the fault of Germany—in the establishment and execution of the Hague agreements, has proved once more her conciliatory intentions and her will for peace. French feeling in this matter can give rise to no misunderstanding: it is an indication which makes it possible to look to the future with confidence.'

3. On the other hand, the celebrations which are taking place in Germany in honour of the evacuation, though they are realised to be natural, are noted with a certain anxiety. France may desire peace with all [her] heart, but the key to its maintenance will be found perhaps in Berlin rather than in Paris; in other words a great deal will depend upon the use which the Germans will make of this French concession. If the Germans create the impression here that they do not appreciate the spirit of it, and merely use it as a peg on which to hang fresh demands, they will play into the hands of M. Briand's critics, the apostle of conciliation, who will point out that his policy is a mistake and thereby weaken his position.

4. If, on the other hand, proper appreciation of the new spirit is shown in Germany, M. Briand will be enabled to continue his policy of *rapprochement* between the two countries. The advice, therefore, to Germany is that in her own interests she had better go slow now and rest content for the



present with what Stresemann's enlightened policy has already achieved for her.

I have, &c.

TYRRELL

ENCLOSURE IN No. 306

*Telegram from M. Briand to M. Tirard*

Au moment où prennent fin, avec l'évacuation complète des territoires rhénans les hautes fonctions qui vous avaient été confiées, il y a onze ans, je tiens à vous exprimer la satisfaction et la gratitude du Gouvernement de la République pour la conscience et le tact dont vous avez constamment fait preuve dans l'accomplissement d'une tâche lourde et souvent particulièrement délicate.

Pendant le temps que vous avez passé à la tête de la haute commission, vous avez eu de nombreuses occasions de démontrer à la population de la rive gauche du Rhin que si la France était ferme dans la défense de ses droits, elle entendait du moins rester fidèle au désir qui l'anime de créer avec ses ennemis d'hier l'atmosphère de coopération pratique et d'entente morale, indispensable au maintien de la paix.

Pour l'application de cette politique vous avez toujours su vous assurer le concours efficace de vos collègues alliés et maintenir de la manière la plus heureuse au sein de la haute commission la communauté de vues et d'action nécessaire.

Au témoignage public qu'il vous rend, le Gouvernement associe tous ceux qui, sous votre direction guidée à la fois par l'équité et la bienveillance, ont été, à des titres divers, vos collaborateurs.—BRIAND.

No. 307

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received July 7)*

*No. 543 [C 5479/16/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, July 3, 1930

The final withdrawal of the troops of occupation from the Rhineland, while welcomed universally by the press in the interests of the Rhenish population, has evoked a certain amount of ungracious comment, and I am not surprised to learn that German correspondents in Paris report that French opinion is somewhat disappointed with the attitude of the German press. In a later despatch I propose to make some observations on the presidential manifesto and the German attitude to the evacuation of the Rhineland.

2. The Nationalist 'Kreuz-Zeitung', after sympathising with the Rhinelanders on the conclusion of the twelve-year period of occupation, states that the history books of the future will teem with descriptions of the cruelties and misdemeanours of the white and coloured soldiery who occupied the

Rhineland for so many years. 'The period of French occupation on the Rhine, that era of shame and tribulation, must be commemorated for the sake of coming generations. France lost a magnificent opportunity of establishing correct relations with this country when she made the evacuation a means of exacting blackmailing terms. We know that the Rhine is not yet free. Owing to the demilitarisation of the Rhineland and the one-sided disarmament of Germany, this country, and above all the Rhineland itself, continues to be exposed to the caprice of our worst enemy. Evacuation, which had to take place at latest by the year 1935, was purchased at immense cost by the Young plan without regard to our legal rights under article 431 of the treaty. The question whether the gain in time of five years was worth the price is a question for the future. If, however, the premature evacuation of the province was, in actual fact, a success, then we have to thank those who in tireless day-to-day resistance to brute force, often at the risk of their lives, finally made the French understand that their hope of detaching the Rhine and the Ruhr from the rest of Germany was vain.'

3. The German National 'Tages-Zeitung' writes in much the same spirit. 'It would be foolish to deny the historical significance of the evacuation of the Rhineland. And yet no one can join in the general jubilation without some scruples concerning the price which this earlier evacuation is costing Germany. Large sections of the population are not even aware of the fact that we were entitled to the evacuation of the third zone for years past, and that this evacuation was withheld until we gave way to the pressure of blackmail.' The newspaper goes on to say that Germany accepted the Dawes plan, signed the Locarno Agreement and entered the League in the hope of purchasing earlier evacuation of the Rhine thereby. 'In the autumn of 1926 Stresemann hoped to achieve this end, only to be disappointed. Germany accepted the Young plan and all that it entailed, and, finally, with all its booty, the French marched out of the Rhineland at the last possible moment.' The 'Tages-Zeitung' continues that the French annexation plans in the Rhineland failed owing to the determined resistance of the Rhenish population and the opposition of public opinion throughout the world. 'But Germany remains under an invisible military and political pressure. The demilitarised Rhineland is bounded by a gigantic system of fortresses manned by the overwhelming army of France.' The newspaper concludes that Briand's recent memorandum on the federation of Europe gives Germany an opportunity of discussing the limitations of her sovereign rights on the Rhine, and requests the German Government to raise these questions in their reply to M. Briand.

4. In a further article the same newspaper points out that three-quarters of a million Germans are still exposed to the pressure of occupation in the Saar, and that the danger of re-occupation of the Rhineland exists so long as the obligation to execute the Young plan remains, thanks to the weakness of the German delegation in accepting the sanctions clause at The Hague in January.

5. The newspapers of the Hugenberg group comment sarcastically on the

*naïveté* of those German supporters of a bankrupt policy, namely, the policy of understanding, who state that the Rhineland has been evacuated five years before the date fixed by the treaty. 'The truth is that the Rhineland has been evacuated many years after the date when it should have been evacuated in accordance with the text and spirit of the relevant clauses of the Treaty of Versailles. The supporters of the policy of Locarno declare that the Rhineland has been evacuated because of that policy. But the truth is that not even the Young plan and all the other concessions made successively by Germany would have purchased evacuation were it not that the pressure of world opinion forced the French to depart.' The 'Lokal-Anzeiger' remarks that the population of the French occupied area presented General Manteuffel with a golden sabre in recognition of his chivalrous conduct during the period of occupation in 1871. No such chivalry was shown by the French generals to the German population during the twelve-year period which has now elapsed.

6. The 'Tag,' another Hugenberg newspaper, quotes the Minister of the Interior, Dr. Wirth, who, in his speech at the liberation festival at Mainz on the 1st July, admitted that the freedom of the Rhineland had been purchased expensively, namely, at the cost of the Young plan.

7. The 'Kölnische Zeitung' (People's party) after a tribute to Dr. Stresemann's statesmanship, writes as follows: 'Territory occupied by the enemy is evacuated in accordance with the treaty, but that is all. Evacuation was due since the day when the Dawes agreement secured their tribute to the French. The delay in evacuation became more than ever a breach of justice after Germany signed the Locarno Treaty. The gesture of conciliation in the form of evacuation became more and more worthless as time sped. The (French) troops have merely changed their quarters, and are ready to advance again should it be necessary, and should the opportunity be favourable.'

8. The independent Nationalist organ, the 'Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung,' pays a tribute to its political opponent, the Social-Democratic leader and ex-Chancellor, Hermann Müller, to whose personal initiative in September 1928 the Rhineland owes its freedom. There is no ground, according to the newspaper, for undue satisfaction. The Saar, it points out, is still occupied and the Rhineland is subject to numerous controls and exposed to numerous sanctions which must be removed as time elapses. 'A French newspaper of the Left,' continues the 'Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung,' 'writes that France has again given an instance of her traditional generosity. Let the only answer on our part be the silence of cool contempt! What a tremendous psychological effect French policy could have had on Germany had the evacuation of the Rhineland been accomplished years ago as a gesture of generosity and political reconciliation! The British Government recognised that late in the day, namely, at The Hague last August. At least three times France exploited the occupation in order to purchase evacuation at an enormous price, namely, at the cost of the Dawes plan, the Locarno Treaty, and, finally, the Young plan.' The newspaper goes on to say that it was well for

Germany that France did not display any unexpected generosity. Had she done so, Germany would have been overcome by a wave of pacifist sentimentalism, and would have abandoned herself to French overtures unreservedly. The final verdict of the newspaper is as follows: 'We calmly accept from the French what they have owed us for a considerable time. The French have nothing to fear from us whether in a political or a military sense, but they must henceforth give up all claim to a position of suzerainty where we are concerned.'

9. In the leading Centre organ, 'Germania,' Dr. Kaas, who, if circumstances had been favourable, might now be Minister for Foreign Affairs, expresses the Centre view in the following terms: 'The occupation of the Rhineland, which Clemenceau obtained despite the opposition of Mr. Lloyd George and President Wilson, did little good and certainly no honour to France. Had France succeeded in overcoming her scruples and put an end to the occupation at an earlier date, she would have made a moral conquest of immense value for the future. Psychologically the most favourable hour for evacuation struck in September 1926, when Briand and Stresemann signed the Locarno Agreement<sup>1</sup> and Germany entered the League. Locarno lost much of its popularity and much of its suggestive effect in Germany in consequence. In fact, it has never quite recovered. Many of the currents and cross-currents of "revenge," which are regarded with suspicion in France to-day arise from the disappointment felt, above all, by the youth of Germany at the poverty of the results of the Locarno policy. There is nothing sensational about the end of the occupation. There is nothing generous in the French gesture. It is merely the inevitable result of an agreement purchased at heavy cost on the German side. But in 1926 it would have been different. Evacuation would have been received with a storm of applause, and the idea of a Franco-German understanding would have benefited immensely.'

10. Dr. Kaas goes on to say that a mortgage still remains to be redeemed in the Rhineland so long as the demilitarisation and other control provisions remain in force, and so long as the River Rhine itself is under international control. The undue demands made on German foreign policy by Franco-German questions have now come to an end. 'Other political realities will have to receive more attention. We would be running counter to our European mission and our own interests were we to treat these possibilities with less attention out of regard for France, all the more as a permanently satisfactory system of positive co-operation with France does not appear to be removed from the realm of doubt. And that is the case so long as France is not prepared to recognise Germany's demand for complete parity as a Great Power in a quite different spirit and in a more tangible way than she has hitherto done. Hitherto a mixture of distrust and victorious mentality prevented our Western neighbour from progressing so far. Further delay on

<sup>1</sup> The Locarno Agreements were made in October, 1925, and formally signed in December, 1925. They were given effect, and ratifications exchanged, in September, 1926, on the entry of Germany into the League of Nations.

her part would force us into similar delay if not into some quite new orientation. Even the most convinced supporter of Franco-German understanding and co-operation can only envisage these on the basis of loyal equality. France has hitherto turned a deaf ear. Just as she refused the Italian demand for parity at London, so she hardly conceals her distaste for Germany's efforts to obtain effective parity as a Great Power. Tension and dissonance of this kind cannot be done away with by the proclamation of Pan-Europa. Pan-Europa is a dream and must remain a deceptive principle so long as the supporters of the idea cannot make up their minds to adopt the principle of parity. The development curve in the question of disarmament—to take only one question—shows how far we have to go before anything practical is achieved.'

11. Similarly, the Democratic 'Börsen-Courier' complains that the evacuation of the Rhineland was delayed by France until it was too late. Had the signature of the Locarno Agreement been followed by complete evacuation, the effect on Europe would have been permanently beneficial. The newspaper asserts that it was partly due to the efforts of Dr. Stresemann and partly to the lapse of time that France eventually made up her mind that the annexation of the Rhineland was out of the question and that the occupation of the province was not necessary for her security.

12. The Democratic 'Berliner Tageblatt' pays a tribute to Dr. Stresemann and finds fault with the presidential manifesto which was drawn up by the Government and by the Chancellor without any mention of Dr. Stresemann's services in connexion with the Rhineland.

13. The Social-Democratic newspapers have little to say so far as relations with France or foreign policy are concerned. 'Vorwärts' complains that the Hugenberg press endeavours to minimise the importance of the evacuation in order to minimise the success of the policy of the Left parties which led up to that evacuation. It also complains that the Government manifesto makes no reference to the services of Dr. Stresemann, and that Ministers like Dr. Schiele and Herr Treviranus who opposed the Young plan have now signed the manifesto to the German people, and have had the honour of addressing the meetings of thanksgiving in the Palatinate.

14. The 'Frankfurter Zeitung' (Democratic) finds fault with the Government for failing to subscribe more vigorously to the policy which has led to the evacuation of the Rhineland. It complains that the speech delivered by the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Reichstag a few days ago likewise contained no reference to Stresemann or his policy. While admitting that unity should be observed and party strife avoided on a solemn occasion like the present, it insists that unity should not be observed at the cost of truth and insight. The official manifesto should have contained a clear and straightforward admission that only one foreign policy was possible: the policy of Rathenau, Erzberger, Ebert and Stresemann, the policy which led to the evacuation of the Rhineland. The manifesto should also have stated that, with the disappearance of the occupation, a great obstacle to a real understanding between France and Germany had also disappeared. The

newspaper goes on to complain that the French are partly at fault in refusing to complete the work of evacuation by quitting the Saar Valley. Germany, it says, must continue to aim at an understanding with France and must encourage those circles in France which have carried on so determined and courageous a struggle with nationalism and militarism.

15. Numerous provincial newspapers, the 'Magdeburger Zeitung' and the 'Weser Zeitung' of the People's party, the Nationalist 'Bremer Nachrichten' and the 'Pfälzische Rundschau' (non-party) take the view that German foreign policy must now proceed to new tasks, namely to fresh attacks on the one-sided provisions of the Treaty of Versailles which restrict Germany's freedom. They enumerate these provisions in order of importance, and lay stress on the question of the eastern frontier.

16. The 'Diplomatische Politische Korrespondenz,' in a semi-official article, writes that a great aim has certainly been attained, but that it is impossible to endorse the view taken in many foreign newspapers which speak of a general liquidation of the war. 'Unfortunately,' writes the newspaper, 'a great deal remains to be done before the war can be liquidated in the sense understood at Geneva after the agreements of autumn 1928. Germany's sovereignty remains, as "The Times" correctly stated in its leading article yesterday, incomplete so long as the Saar problem is not solved. The construction of a new State system in Europe based on right can only be effected by neighbourly and brotherly co-operation. That is the lesson taught by the liberation of the Rhineland, an event which also teaches us that all hindrances, and especially those which obstruct Germany's development in a one-sided way, must be overcome if the natural development of Europe is not to be thwarted.'

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

### No. 308

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received July 7)*

*No. 545 [C 5481/16/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, July 3, 1930

I hardly need to report that the final evacuation of the Rhineland has been a source of considerable gratification here. The populace, as I reported in my telegram No. 83<sup>1</sup> of the 1st July, expressed their feelings in the usual way, and bonfires, bell-ringing and torchlight processions were features of the celebrations in all parts of the country.

2. It cannot be said that the third act in the drama, the evacuation of the third zone, aroused the same intense feeling as the evacuation of the first zone in January 1926. At that time the population of the Rhineland were in close contact with a very large army of occupation, and a few years earlier the whole of the Rhineland had experienced the rigours of military control

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

during the campaign of resistance in the Ruhr. Prior to the final evacuation conditions had changed out of all recognition, and the occupation had become invisible almost in the literal sense of the word. Again, the evacuation of the first zone was tangible proof that France intended sooner or later to evacuate the Rhineland, a point on which doubt existed in very many German minds up to the last moment. The certainty of ultimate evacuation became absolute after the signature of the Rhine Pact at Locarno, the entrance of Germany into the League and the final Reparation Conference at Paris last year. The final withdrawal of foreign troops, which is now being celebrated, was a foregone conclusion after the withdrawal of the British troops last December. Germans might still have been in doubt as to the actual date but not as to the certainty of the departure of the remainder of the French garrison.

3. Even when due allowance has been made in this way for the feelings of the country and of the Government, the manifesto issued in the name of the President and signed by the members of the Government—a translation of which is enclosed herein—seems to me to be somewhat disappointing. And, indeed, the general attitude of the press, as you will have gathered from my despatch No. 543<sup>2</sup> of the 3rd July, is equally open to criticism. The manifesto appears to me to exemplify two of the besetting weaknesses of the German character, ingratitude and tactlessness. The internal affairs of Germany are not our affair, but one might have expected that Dr. Stresemann's name would have appeared in the Government manifesto, and that some mention of the policy which he pursued with such tenacity and at such sacrifice would have been made. Germany's relations with France are in the first place her own affair, and for some time to come Germany must be dependent on French goodwill if she is to obtain further concessions and alleviations. For reasons of general policy the German Government might have seen fit to insert some recognition of the loyalty of the Powers of occupation and the punctuality with which the French troops executed their programme of withdrawal.

4. But I am more concerned with the reference in the manifesto to the evacuation of the Saar. It is an unattractive feature of the German character to display little gratitude for favours received, but when the receipt of favours is followed up by fresh demands, there are grounds for feeling impatient. With the exception of the Social-Democratic press and a few Democratic newspapers, the remainder of the political journals put forward a list of demands which have to be granted before Germany can feel that justice has been done to her. Even the Centre party lend support to the Nationalist view in this instance, namely, that the freedom of the Rhineland has not been restored so long as any of the servitudes imposed on that area by the Treaty of Versailles remain.

5. As reported in my despatch under reference, Dr. Kaas, the leader of the Centre party and the Centre nominee for the post of German Foreign Minister, developed in 'Germania' a train of thought which is possibly shared

by the Chancellor, and which may have been responsible for the arid manifesto of the 1st July. Dr. Kaas evidently finds posthumous fault with Dr. Stresemann's policy on the ground that it failed to register sufficiently quick returns, and he evidently shares the view held very widely in Germany to-day that the price paid for the successive steps of evacuation, and especially for the final step, was unduly high.

6. It is satisfactory to find that this attitude of mind is not universal, and that more sensible views are held in influential quarters. No sooner had the Presidential manifesto appeared than newspapers of the Left criticised the absence of any reference to the late Dr. Stresemann and his policy. Newspapers reported that a difference of opinion had arisen between the Prussian Government and the Government of the Reich on this subject. It now transpires, although the Government have refused to give any information to journalists, that the different Governments interested in the occupied areas, namely, Prussia, Bavaria, Hesse and Oldenburg, intended to issue separate manifestos. At the instigation of the Government of the Reich it was, however, decided that one manifesto issued in the name of the President would suffice. On receiving the draft address the Prussian Government objected to the absence of Dr. Stresemann's name, and issued a manifesto of their own in which reference is made to the statesmen whose policy led to the freedom of the Rhineland.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

ENCLOSURE IN No. 308

*Manifesto to the German People*

(Translation.)

After long years of patience and tribulation the desire of all Germans is at last attained: the foreign troops of occupation have left the Rhineland. True patriotism, patient endurance and joint sacrifice have restored to a territory which, since the unhappy end of the war, has been occupied by foreign troops, the most precious of national possessions, namely, freedom. The road of suffering which the people of the Rhine have trodden for the sake of their country with heads held high is now at an end.

This day of liberation is to be a day of thanksgiving. Our first thoughts to-day must be with those who fell in the fight for German freedom, who gave their lives for their fatherland. With these men we associate all those who, during the hard years of occupation, sacrificed themselves from patriotic motives. We shall not forget the sorrows of the men and of the women who, during the time of trial, suffered in mind, soul and body for Germany's sake. We shall always bear in mind the many thousands who, through loyalty to their fatherland and devotion to duty, were driven by the force of foreign arms from house and home. To all these we owe a debt of gratitude which nothing can repay, but which we can acknowledge by promising to show



ourselves, by devotion to the service of our country and people, worthy of such sacrifice.

Our brothers on the Saar still await the day of their return to the mother-country. With all our hearts we greet to-day the German soil and the German people on the Saar, and we promise to do all that in us lies to assure that their desire for reunion may soon be realised. They, too, deserve the thanks of Germany, for we know that they have proudly upheld their national character as Germans, and that they do not wish their return to the mother-country to be purchased on terms harmful to German interests as a whole.

Heavy clouds still hang over the political and economic life of the nation, but none the less this happy day gives cause for confidence. A nation which, left entirely to its own resources, has yet held its own despite the sorest affliction, a country which even in the time of bitterest need has rendered to science, art and engineering services so great as to win the admiration of the entire world, such a country has a right to face the future with confidence and self-esteem. By years of grievous suffering, by accepting heavy burdens, we have regained freedom for the land on the Rhine; and for our country's happiness we shall join in preserving that freedom.

Let our resolve in this solemn hour be a resolve for unity. Let us unite in an effort after years of tribulation to restore better and brighter days to our beloved fatherland by peaceful means. Let us all unite in the cry: 'Deutschland, Deutschland über alles!'

VON HINDENBURG,

*President of the Reich*

The Reichs Cabinet: DR. BRÜNING, DIETRICH,  
DR. CURTIUS, DR. WIRTH, DR. STEGERWALD,  
DR. BREDT, DR. GROENER, DR. SCHÄTZEL,  
VON GUÉRARD, DR. SCHIELE, TREVIRANUS.

### No. 309

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received July 7)*

*No. 546 [C 5482/2056/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, *July 3, 1930*

I had the honour to receive by the bag which arrived to-day your despatch No. 622<sup>1</sup> of the 26th ultimo, enclosing a despatch from His Majesty's Ambassador at Paris, No. 660<sup>2</sup> regarding the Saar negotiations. In the last-mentioned despatch Lord Tyrrell reports that his German informant, who had until now taken a very optimistic view of the Saar negotiations, seemed

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed. In this despatch Lord Tyrrell reported that, according to his German informant, the negotiations were likely to break down over the French demand for a mixed administration of the mines.

for the first time to entertain grave doubt as to whether the negotiations could succeed.

2. This impression was confirmed to me by Dr. Curtius to-day. I had called on his Excellency before going on leave and, in the course of conversation, had referred to the evacuation of the Rhineland, which I thought closed one chapter of history and marked the beginning of a new epoch. Dr. Curtius at once remarked that, whilst what I had said might be true, yet the question of the Saar remained to be settled. He was not hopeful that a settlement would be reached and proceeded to give his reasons for this view.

3. He admitted that the evacuation of the Rhineland might be considered from a different point of view on each side of the frontier. The Germans, for instance, had claimed it as a right long overdue. The French might consider that in withdrawing their troops before 1935 they had made a gesture of goodwill. It was for this reason that it would, in his view, be difficult for any French Government to make what in the eyes of French public opinion would constitute a further gesture of goodwill by withdrawing from the Saar.

4. I ventured to observe that there seemed to me to be two questions involved, *i.e.*, the political question and the economic question. As regards the former, everyone, I thought, admitted that if a plebiscite were taken in the Saar, the population would vote for the return of that territory to Germany. The economic question concerned mainly the administration of the mines. At this point Dr. Curtius said most emphatically that the German Government would never agree to a mixed administration of the mines. All but a small portion of these mines had belonged to the Prussian Government for many years and must revert to that Government. They had been made over to France for a period in order to compensate the latter for the destruction of the mines in Northern France, but France was now 'swimming in coal,' and the damage to the French mines had long since been made good. Dr. Curtius's arguments, in fact, were on the same lines as those contained in a leading article of 'The Times' of the 1st July, which he quoted with approval. He admitted that the customs frontier could not at one stroke be transferred from the east to the west, but thought that it would be possible to make temporary economic arrangements in connexion with the transfer of the Saar Territory and its mines to Germany.

5. I am referring, in my despatch No. 545<sup>3</sup> of to-day's date, to the characteristic manner in which the German Government, having obtained satisfaction in one question, namely, the evacuation of the Rhineland, have lost no time in raising the further question of the retrocession of the Saar Territory.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

<sup>3</sup> No. 308.

No. 310

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received July 7)*

*No. 547 [C 5483/52/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, July 3, 1930

I asked Dr. Curtius to-day whether, in his opinion, the Government would be able to get the Reichstag to accept the financial proposals necessary to tide over the present difficult situation. His Excellency replied in the affirmative. The different parties in the Reichstag would be forced, in his view, to see that it was necessary to find a way out of the present impasse and eventually to put the finances of the Reich on a firm foundation. Final and definite financial reforms could not, however, be undertaken until the autumn.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

No. 311

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received July 7)*

*No. 548 [C 5484/680/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, July 3, 1930

I have the honour to report that, in the course of an interview which I had with the Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day, His Excellency rather went out of his way to affirm in particularly energetic terms that Germany could not rest content with her present frontier in the East. If necessary he would not leave the French under any illusion on that point, a remark which I took to mean that he would make this clear in his reply to M. Briand's memorandum on the federation of Europe.

2. He repeated that the *tracé* of the German-Polish frontier was absurd in many places and proceeded to draw on a piece of paper, for my benefit, the scene of a recent incident on that frontier. This must, I think, have been the incident which occurred at Karnitzken (Kreis Marienwerder). According to Dr. Curtius, a certain farm in that neighbourhood belonging to a German was divided in half by the frontier, with the result that the occupants of the farm had to be furnished with passes to enable them to work that portion of the farm situated within Polish territory. On the occasion in question, the farmer's daughter was working on the Polish side of the frontier. With her was a woman friend who was on a visit from Saxony and who did not have a Polish pass. The Polish frontier guard came on the scene and asked for the production of the Polish passes. As the visitor from Saxony had not got such a document he proceeded to fix the bayonet on his rifle. The German farmer, seeing this, fired at the Polish soldier. Dr. Curtius showed considerable feeling in recounting this incident. He said that whilst the Polish soldier might have been technically justified in proceeding to severe measures on finding that the German woman was not

furnished with a Polish pass, yet the action of the German farmer was morally justified and he would have been right every time in taking the action which he had done.

3. The Polish Government had proposed the constitution of a commission to go into the question of these frontier incidents, but the German Government had thought this was rather a cumbersome method of procedure and had suggested that an official of each Ministry for Foreign Affairs should proceed respectively to Berlin and Warsaw with the documents bearing on the cases in question. Dr. Curtius reminded me of the statements he had made about German-Polish relations in his recent speech in the Reichstag. His Excellency ended by saying that he could not be accused of failing to do everything he could to bring about good relations with Poland. He had forced the German-Polish Liquidation Agreement through the Reichstag in the face of the greatest opposition. He was now determined to get the Reichstag, before it rose, to approve the German-Polish Commercial Treaty, and the further fate of that treaty would depend on the Poles themselves.

4. In the speech alluded to above Dr. Curtius said that the German-Polish frontier incidents were not necessary in order to demonstrate the unsatisfactory character of the German-Polish frontier. I cannot help feeling that His Excellency, in referring to this subject with me, was under the influence of the irritation produced on his mind by the details of the frontier incident which he recounted to me.

5. I am sending a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's Ambassador at Warsaw.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

### No. 312

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received August 14)*

No. 662 [C 6384/680/18]

Sir.

BERLIN, August 12, 1930

References to the eastern frontiers in the speech made by Herr Treviranus, the leader of the People's Conservative party, during the Constitution Day celebrations on the 10th August, appear, according to the reports of German correspondents abroad, to have aroused some feeling, particularly in the Paris and Warsaw press. In the Reichstag itself a meeting of Rhineland, Palatinate and Saar Associations was held to celebrate the evacuation of the Rhineland. In connexion with it, a demonstration of the Eastern Associations took place outside the Reichstag in commemoration of the plebiscite in East and West Prussia of ten years ago. In the course of a speech to these Eastern Associations, Herr Treviranus, after referring to the freeing of the west, is reported to have declared: 'Now the east demands the unification of all German people. In the depths of our souls we are thinking of the truncated Vistula lands, of the unhealed wounds in the eastern flank, that

withered lung of the Reich. We think of the iniquitous insistence of Wilson on the unnatural cutting-off of East Prussia and of the half-breed condition to which Danzig was condemned. The future of our Polish neighbours, who owe their power as a State not the least to sacrifices of German blood, can only be assured if Germany and Poland are not kept in a condition of unrest through an unjust demarcation of the frontiers.'

2. Most of the German newspapers report the bitter criticisms aroused, particularly in Paris, by these observations. Only a few of these papers offer any comment of their own. It is noteworthy, however, that the four or five which do are united in declaring that Herr Treviranus actually said nothing that has not often been said before, that he was really expressing what all Germans feel and that his remarks in no way justify the bitter criticism they aroused abroad.

3. The 'Berliner Tageblatt' observes that the chauvinistic French newspapers look upon every reference to this subject as a threat of war. These papers, it adds, speak of a 'warlike speech' of the Minister Treviranus; the 'Intransigent' refers to 'a real declaration of war addressed to Poland,' while Pertinax, in the 'Écho de Paris,' invokes the spirit of Locarno against him. To all this, the 'Tageblatt' declares, it must be retorted that the Minister did not say a word which could be held to show an intention on the part of Germany to seek any other solution than that within the framework of article 19 of the League of Nations Covenant, the revision article. The right to strive for such a solution, Germany cannot and will not forgo. So far, the newspaper continues, as the actual words spoken by Herr Treviranus are known, it believes that he wished only to say clearly to the Poles that it was in their own interests, as well as in Germany's and those of the rest of Europe, to collaborate in removing the eternal unrest caused by the unfair demarcation of the frontiers.

4. The 'Vossische Zeitung,' which may also be considered to express moderate opinion in Germany, observes: 'The text of the speech does not provide the slightest occasion for the complaints coming from Warsaw or Paris, or even London. We found in this connexion Hergt's "Ritt nach dem Osten" out of place. But we can find nothing in Treviranus's speech which other German politicians in responsible positions might not have said, and which Stresemann also might not have said. Even the Social Democrat, Dr. Breitscheid, once spoke in a similar vein. No German can ever recognise the demarcation of the frontiers in the east as just or practical.'

5. The 'Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung' declares that the Minister has done nothing but repeat facts which are known to all the world. 'His opinion,' it adds, 'concerning the untenability of the German eastern frontier is shared, not only by the whole German people, but also by all sensible political and economic leaders abroad, with the exception, naturally, of Poland. The German eastern frontier is well known to be the schoolboy example of a treaty provision which, to use the expression contained in article 19 of the League Covenant, has been shown to be "inapplicable."' The 'Berliner Börsen-Zeitung' writes in a similar strain.

6. The organ of the Centre party, 'Germania,' declares that the remarks of the Minister express thoughts which have been propounded by German statesmen and by the Reichspräsident himself on different occasions, and which, on account of the present political situation and the definition with which they were formulated have aroused a more or less loud echo in the world. 'We will not quarrel,' it continues, 'as to whether Germany's programme for the future could not have been described in other words and phrases. Treviranus spoke to the representatives of the frontier districts as clearly as it seemed to him desirable to do on the special occasion of the German Constitution Festival. To construe any aggressiveness contrary to international law, or a speech of revenge out of such words is simply idle talk.'

7. The Social Democratic 'Vorwärts' merely reports the bitter criticism aroused abroad, but ventures no comments.

8. In my own opinion the significance of this incident lies more in what Herr Treviranus omitted to say, rather than in what he actually said. He referred clearly and unmistakably to the necessity for a revision of the eastern frontiers, but he made no mention, as the 'Berliner Tageblatt' tries to suggest, of revision through the means provided in article 19 of the League of Nations Covenant. Herr Treviranus is a young and apparently headstrong ex-naval officer, but his attitude reflects a tendency discernible in Germany to-day, which I can only hope may be fleeting, to go too fast and too far.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

### No. 313

*Mr. R. H. Campbell (Paris) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received August 15)*

*No. 930 [C 6393/230/18]*

Sir,

PARIS, August 13, 1930

I have the honour to inform you that M. Poincaré spoke in the Meuse on the 10th August—his first real appearance in public since his illness. After reference to the manner in which the department had suffered in the war, he said that France had been obliged herself to advance the greater part of the sum necessary for the reparation of the devastated districts. 'In order to recover this expenditure she has now nothing to rely upon but the promises of Germany. When a victorious nation is so indulgent as to place such confidence in the Government which declared war upon it, the least that can be asked in return for this generosity is a cessation of the constant attempts to obtain from her additional concessions. The least she is entitled to ask is that there be a cessation of the attempts to efface the signatures placed on the treaties of peace, so frequently confirmed by a long series of subsequent conventions. Sixteen years ago the soldiers of General von Strantz found their way through the Hauts-de-Meuse. Then it was war. To-day it is peace and we do not mean to allow people to slip by us, by hidden channels, interminable files of new claims. We cannot for ever be

the only people to stand the cost of the agreements which are proposed to us. We owe it to our dead not to allow anyone either openly or surreptitiously to assault the treaties.'

2. In an article in the 'Illustration' of the 2nd August, M. Poincaré had already referred to this question. He said that Germany neglected no opportunity of staking out the stages of her progress with her customary skill. 'Every time she obtains a concession she requires another, and in order to date her progress she lays out in advance under our eyes the successive articles of her programme. She proceeds by stages with a perseverance and discipline which it is impossible not to admire, but before which we must not allow ourselves to go to sleep.' A somewhat similar line was taken by M. Barthou in the 'Annales' of the 1st August. Enumerating the claims of Germany since the evacuation, he emphasised in particular the reference made by the President of the Reich to the possibility of the abolition of the demilitarised zone. Marshal Hindenburg had stated that 'the evacuated territories are still submitted to restrictions which restrain the sovereignty of Germany and her freedom within it.' The 'Temps' and many other newspapers have noted the repetition of Marshal Hindenburg's claim respecting the Rhineland by Herr Wirth, and the German Nationalist statements respecting the Saar, Eupen-Malmédy, Danzig and the Polish Corridor have all been remarked. The 'Temps' of the 13th August recognises that certain of these declarations are natural in the electoral period through which Germany is passing, but it observes that 'it is right that the German people should realise that these tactics will not really serve their interests, that there are no new concessions to be expected from the former Allied Governments, and that the latter consider that they have already sacrificed too much in a spirit of confidence which the Reich has done nothing to justify up to now.' M. Briand's proposals for the Federation of Europe have also recently been attacked in Nationalist circles here as having given Germany an opportunity to raise the question of the revision of the treaties.

3. Lord Tyrrell pointed out in his despatches Nos. 761<sup>1</sup> and 784<sup>2</sup> of the 3rd and the 8th July the importance of moderation in Germany if M. Briand was to be enabled to continue his policy of reconciliation between the two countries. I doubt if it is yet necessary to take too seriously the criticisms in France which have been aroused by the recent German declarations; yet it is obvious that M. Briand's task is not made easier by them. I hear on good authority that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and even the German Embassy itself have been struck by the stiffening in the attitude of Berlin which has taken place in the last six weeks in the minor questions which are at the moment under discussion between the two Governments.

I have, &c.

R. H. CAMPBELL

<sup>1</sup> No. 306.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed. In this despatch Lord Tyrrell reported that M. Briand had spoken to the German Ambassador on July 4 with regard to the incidents in the Rhineland after the departure of the French troops.

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received August 18)*

*No. 668 [C 6459/68/018]*

Sir,

BERLIN, August 13, 1930

With reference to my despatch No. 662<sup>1</sup> of the 12th August, I have the honour to inform you that the sharp criticism aroused abroad by the allusions in Herr Treviranus's Constitution Day speech to the eastern frontier has moved Herr Treviranus to give a public explanation of his remarks. This explanation took the form of a conversation between himself and the chief editor of the 'Berliner Börsen-Courier,' which was broadcast from the central station last night.

2. In the course of this duologue, the Minister explained that it was a complete misunderstanding to interpret the conception 'front-line spirit' as being merely the war lust of warriors whose eyes were fixed on arms. For himself, it meant the feeling of greater comradeship and stronger unity. If the soldiers were nowadays showing greater activity on the political front, this was not only with the intention of confronting each other but also of drawing nearer together. The World War could be liquidated only by front-line soldiers.

3. The Minister then declared that it was self-evident that he had in no way contemplated a revision of the eastern frontier by adventurous and warlike means, when in his Sunday speech he had declared that the frontiers of the Reich could not hold out against international law and the national will to live. There had never been any doubt that treaties concluded in accordance with the precepts of international law would be maintained. The injustice of the frontier could be rectified only by means of peaceful understanding, but Germany could not renounce her demand for equity and frank, open agreement. He particularly rejected the assertion made in France that his attitude towards the possibility of revising the frontier differed from that of the late Dr. Stresemann as explained in a reply made by the latter to a question put by Count Westarp at the end of 1925. Messrs. Chamberlain and Lloyd George had likewise, in the House of Commons, referred to the possibilities of revision, which lay within the scope of the Treaty of Locarno.

4. In conclusion, the Minister declared that for Germans, who lived in the middle of Europe, devoid of weapons or any technical means of protection which could in any way compare with the armaments of their neighbours, peace was an essential necessity for their existence, a peace, moreover, so honourable and unambiguous as to deserve the name of peace. He believed that in this sense Germany had an incomparably greater mission in Europe than ever before. It was Germany's task to find and establish the principles of justice, which were essential before the nations of Europe could live together in prosperity.

<sup>1</sup> No. 312.



5. The Social Democratic organ, 'Vorwärts' is the only newspaper to offer any considerable comment on Herr Treviranus's explanations. It welcomes the assurance that the speech was not intended to mean anything, but is ironically surprised that this assurance should come from the Minister himself. The amazement felt by Herr Treviranus at the effect caused by his speech reminds it of the amazement felt by the ex-Emperor after some of his famous declarations. The paper has practically nothing to add to the Minister's statement, conforming, as it does, entirely with Germany's official foreign policy, which, in spite of any internal political contradictions, has always received the support of the Social Democrats. It hopes that this explanation, so promptly given, will convince other countries of the determination of the German people to remove all misunderstandings which might hinder the peace policy of the German Republic.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

### No. 315

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received August 16)*  
*No. 98 Telegraphic [C 6434/680/18]*

BERLIN, August 15, 1930

I asked Secretary of State today whether he could tell me anything about the communiqué issued by Polish Foreign Office and published in some of this morning's papers reporting protest made by Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs to German Chargé d'Affaires regarding Herr Treviranus's recent speech.

Secretary of State read to me a telegram from German Chargé d'Affaires reporting that M. Zaleski had pointed out that Herr Treviranus's remarks constituted an attack on the integrity of Poland and would make relations between the two countries difficult.

Chargé d'Affaires had replied that whilst he could not discuss a speech made by a Minister of Reich, Herr Treviranus's remarks did not constitute an attack on the integrity of Poland which had not been mentioned by name. The speech was not a warlike gesture and, as regards relations between the two countries, Chargé d'Affaires had emphasized the conciliatory attitude of Germany in the matter of liquidating agreement with Poland as also with regard to Polish German commercial treaty.

German Foreign Office intend to issue a communiqué on the above lines to the press. Secretary of State added that Herr Treviranus had not submitted his speech to the Foreign Office before delivering it and that the Foreign Office had had no idea that the Minister would allude to the question of eastern frontier of Germany. He admitted that electoral speeches of Ministers on the war path were apt to prove embarrassing and was afraid that there might be more of the same kind before the elections in Germany took place.

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received August 18)*

*No. 674 [C 6462/680/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, August 15, 1930

With reference to my despatch No. 668<sup>1</sup> of the 13th August, I have the honour to report that some of the German newspapers this morning published an official statement, issued by the Polish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, concerning the recent references by Herr Treviranus to the eastern frontiers. This statement reads as follows:—

‘Immediately after his return from Reval, M. Zaleski had a conversation with the German Chargé d’Affaires in Warsaw concerning the recent speech of Herr Treviranus. M. Zaleski made a decided and formal protest in the name of the Polish Government against the action of a member of the Government of the Reich, which was directed against the integrity of the Polish State. The Minister pointed out that such declarations made every move in connexion with the relations between the two countries impossible, and, what was still worse, created an atmosphere which was hostile to the principles of peaceful co-operation.’

2. The Democratic ‘Berliner Tageblatt’ regrets that the Polish Foreign Minister has adopted a tone to which exception must be taken on the German side, so that an undesirable effect upon the temperature of mutual relations appears to be almost unavoidable. It does not say much, continues the ‘Tageblatt,’ for the friendly intentions of the Polish Government, that they deliberately ignore the interpretation of his speech which the Minister Treviranus gave himself in his statement over the wireless, in which he indicated that the way of peaceful understanding was the only possible one for the removal of the injustice of the demarcation of the frontier. It won’t do, adds the newspaper, after this declaration, in which Treviranus himself corrected the not very happy impression of his speech, so to describe the matter as if the Minister had talked of attacking the integrity of the Polish State, and then to say that an atmosphere has been created which renders peaceful co-operation impossible. ‘The fact,’ continues the ‘Tageblatt,’ ‘to which the Minister gave expression, that a revision of the eastern frontiers, by means of a peaceful understanding, is the wish of all Germans, is really nothing new. There was no need for Polish ill-humour, which has so often been shown in the press, to be aroused. Up to the present it had luckily not impaired mutual relations. The sharp tone of M. Zaleski’s declaration is obviously intended to counter the clearly increasing recognition, throughout the world, of the untenability of the regulation of the frontiers made in Versailles. But the campaign which he is carrying on against this growing conviction is a campaign against the need of tranquillity of the commonwealth of peoples, against the logic of facts, against the removal of a moral injustice and a political mistake; and his strong words only show the weakness of the grounds on which he is fighting.’

<sup>1</sup> No. 314.

3. The Democratic 'Vossische Zeitung,' which is the only other newspaper up to the present to publish M. Zaleski's protest, adopts a similar attitude. It suggests that the fact that the protest came four days after Herr Treviranus's speech shows that the Poles were unable to make up their minds whether they should be officially angry or not; and that, finally, the decision to make a formal protest had less to do with the actual contents of Treviranus's declarations than with the echo which his speech has had almost everywhere abroad. In Paris, declares the 'Vossische Zeitung,' the Left press has sensibly pointed out that the German desire for an alteration of the treaties in itself does not mean a breach of the treaties; in England, various newspapers have expressed similar opinions; in the Northern States, judgments concerning the frontier problem have not been made entirely from the Polish point of view; and, finally, the Italian newspapers have roundly declared the German desires for revision to be entirely justified. On the whole, adds the newspaper, the result of the Treviranus speech—irrespective of whether it is approved of or disapproved of—has been a very lively international discussion of the German-Polish frontier problem. This great international discussion, adds the newspaper, over a theme which is the least agreeable that can be imagined for Poland, is naturally the real reason for the Polish move. 'Up till now,' concludes the 'Vossische,' 'it has always been said that the attempt to alter the existing frontiers can only mean war. Now Warsaw is going a step further, and describes a simple declaration concerning the untenability of the conditions on the German-Polish frontier as a serious threat to German-Polish relations. Such methods will, however, fail of their object in the long run, though it is slowly beginning to be realised in the world that it is not the criticism of untenable conditions which is endangering the ultimate peace of Europe, but the attempt to perpetuate these conditions under all circumstances.'

4. The organ of the Centre party 'Germania' declares that it was itself none too happy over the form of Herr Treviranus's speech, and it expresses satisfaction, therefore, that he has himself dispelled the doubts which had arisen by the explanations he gave over the wireless. 'In spite of many disadvantages,' concludes 'Germania,' 'the speech of Herr Treviranus has had one good effect in that it has brought the question of revision once more into the arena of international discussion, and, in that in France and in England opinions are reported which express honest doubt concerning the impossibility of the existing conditions.'

5. The Nationalist 'Deutsche Tageszeitung' rather unexpectedly sounds a commonsense warning. It doubts whether the question is yet ripe to justify hopes of a satisfactory decision. The will and the intention to work for revision, it adds, are essential, but the realisation of it is only attainable by the adoption of the proper method of revision, and, in certain circumstances, by determined bargaining at the psychological moment.

6. For the rest, the 'Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung' and one or two other papers of the Right, content themselves with printing provocative extracts from the Polish press, describing Herr Treviranus's speech as a 'formal

declaration of war on Poland,' and Treviranus himself as the 'Benjamin of Hindenburg.' The 'Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung' also quotes the 'Illustrowany Kurjer Codzienny' as saying that the Poles are gnashing their teeth because territories which are inhabited by their Polish brethren, such as Silesia, Ermland and Mazuria, have not yet been incorporated in Poland.

7. The 'Königsberg Allgemeine Zeitung' publishes this morning a further interview with Herr Treviranus, which, if it is correctly reported, is of some significance. The newspaper quotes him as saying: 'The correct solution of the corridor problem is the thing which we are striving for with all political and diplomatic means. It is doing me an injustice to suggest that I advocated a solution of the corridor problem by warlike means. No! this is a question which lies immediately before the League of Nations. But now, after the liquidation of the Rhineland problem, the clearing up of the eastern question has become acute. It figures on the next programme on foreign policy of the Government of the Reich.'

8. Meanwhile, the communiqué foreshadowed in my telegram No. 98<sup>2</sup> of to-day's date has been published. It reads as follows:—

'The Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Zaleski, as a great number of the morning papers reported, has made a formal protest against Treviranus's speech, and has described it as being directed against the integrity of Poland. The fact of Zaleski's protest is now confirmed by the competent German authorities. Zaleski declared that the effects upon Polish-German relations must be unfavourable. The German Chargé d'Affaires replied that he could not discuss a speech of the Minister Treviranus, and thereupon indicated that, as far as he knew, there was nothing in the speech of the Minister which might alter German-Polish relations or which was not in conformity with existing treaties. In particular, it was absurd to believe that the Minister Treviranus could have contemplated an alteration of the frontier by warlike means. This attitude of the German Chargé d'Affaires corresponds naturally to the opinion of competent political circles in Berlin. Every Cabinet since the conclusion of peace has held the same opinion in regard to the German-Polish frontier, and has never allowed any doubt to arise as to this opinion.'

9. I am sending a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's Ambassador at Warsaw.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

<sup>2</sup> No. 315.

### No. 317

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received August 25)*

*No. 681 [C 6555/680/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, August 18, 1930

I was unable, before the bag went on the 15th instant, to send you a full report of my conversation with the Secretary of State on which I based my

telegrams Nos. 98<sup>1</sup> and 99.<sup>2</sup> I had arranged to see the Secretary of State on other business on that day and as the morning papers contained the communiqué issued by the Polish Government on the subject of the protest made by M. Zaleski to the German Chargé d’Affaires regarding Herr Treviranus’s speech, I took the opportunity of asking Herr von Bülow what he would tell me about this matter from the German point of view.

2. Herr von Bülow had a telegram from the German Chargé d’Affaires at Warsaw on his table and read me a summary of that telegram, which confirmed generally the accuracy of the Polish communiqué. The German Chargé d’Affaires had answered M. Zaleski in the sense of the communiqué subsequently given to the press by the German Foreign Office, the text of which was contained in my despatch No. 674<sup>3</sup> of the 15th August.

3. Herr von Bülow, who was clearly embarrassed by Herr Treviranus’s incursions into the domain of foreign policy, said that that Minister’s speech had not been submitted to the Foreign Office beforehand. Herr Treviranus had spoken for himself and not on behalf of the Government of the Reich and his speech had been unofficial in so far as a speech by any responsible Minister can be unofficial. After all, he had only given expression to the view held by every German with regard to the unsatisfactory and untenable character of Germany’s eastern frontier, but there was no question, of course, of endeavouring to bring about the revision of that frontier by forcible means. Ministers were apt to let themselves go during the period immediately preceding new elections and he would not be surprised if there were further speeches of much the same character. It may be observed with regard to the foregoing explanation that if the German point of view regarding Germany’s eastern frontier is so well known both in Germany and abroad it was somewhat superfluous for Herr Treviranus to express it.

4. Herr von Bülow then volunteered the information that the French Government had been seriously perturbed by the remarks made by Dr. Wirth with regard to the Rhineland in the speech which he had made in the Reichstag on the occasion of the celebration of the anniversary of Constitution Day. The reference to the fact that the Rhineland was not really free like the rest of Germany was a statement of fact, for it was subject to the servitudes imposed on it by articles 42 and 43 of the Treaty of Versailles, but there was no thought in the minds of the German Government of endeavouring to obtain the suppression or modification of these articles. Perhaps, however, in the distant future the German Government might work for a bi-lateral application of the servitudes at present imposed on the Rhineland, which, I presume, means that they will endeavour to secure the demilitarisation of the corresponding portion of French territory along the Franco-German frontier. (Please see section 1, paragraphs 9 (3 and 7) enclosed in Lord Cushendun’s despatch No. 1371<sup>4</sup> of the 23rd October,

<sup>1</sup> No. 315.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed. This telegram reported the statement by Herr von Bülow about Dr. Wirth’s speech mentioned in paragraph 4 of No. 317.

<sup>3</sup> No. 316.

<sup>4</sup> Not printed.

1928.) Herr von Bülow's remarks in this connexion are interesting as showing the manner in which the German Government may possibly raise this question at some future date. Meanwhile, it appears from what Herr von Bülow added that M. Briand is satisfied with the explanations furnished to him by Herr von Hoesch with regard to the implications of the statements made by various German Ministers to the effect that the Rhineland is not as free as the rest of Germany.

5. Herr Treviranus's statement that the revision of Germany's eastern frontier was an item on Germany's next external programme, confirms the forecast with regard to the sequence in which foreign problems concerning Germany will be taken up by the German Government as given in Sir R. Vansittart's memorandum of the 1st May, enclosed in your despatch No. 461<sup>5</sup> of the 12th May. The view held up till now at this Embassy has been that, once Germany had secured the evacuation of the Rhineland and possibly the retrocession of the Saar, she would devote her energies to internal affairs and that there would be a pause in her external activities. The task, for instance, of putting the financial house of the Reich in order is, indeed, enough to tax all the energies of any German Government, nor is it easy to see how Germany can raise the question of the revision of her eastern frontiers with any hope of success until the political constellation in Europe is particularly favourable to her. Speeches such as those of Herr Treviranus cannot, therefore, help matters from the German point of view. They can only produce unrest and irritation amongst Germany's neighbours and delay the development of the favourable political constellation referred to above. The German Government may, however, think that time is working against them and that unless they raise the question of the revision of their eastern frontier at no distant date circumstances may make it almost impossible eventually to do so. This point of view is rather borne out by the report which has reached me that the press department of the German Foreign Office has been assiduously working up this question.

6. I am sending a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's representative at Warsaw.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

<sup>5</sup> Not printed. Sir R. Vansittart's memorandum was a general survey of the international situation. With regard to Germany Sir R. Vansittart wrote that the objectives of German policy had not been achieved by the termination of Allied military control, the evacuation of the Rhineland, the reparation settlement reached at The Hague Conference, and the abolition of guarantees. The 'further objectives' might be less pressing and vital, but it would be unwise to assume that they were less 'inevitable'. They could be defined as follows: (i) the re-establishment of Germany as a World Power, i.e. the acquisition of colonies and mandates; (ii) the *Anschluss* with Austria; (iii) rearmament 'so as to obtain at least parity with Poland'; (iv) a drastic modification of the German-Polish frontier. Sir R. Vansittart noted that he had set out these objectives 'in inverse order of importance and urgency'.

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received September 1)*  
*No. 723 [C 6739/140/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, August 29, 1930

The snowball of 'revision' continues to roll down the electoral slopes, and, as it rolls, it is gathering speed and size. It may now indeed be said that the first electoral campaign which has taken place in Germany without the shadow of the Rhineland occupation has brought out into the open, through one party or another, all that Germany hopes for and intends to strive for in the field of external affairs. It would be a mistake, however, to take all this agitation too seriously. It should not be forgotten that it is the election which has brought out the rash.

2. An examination of the election manifestos as yet issued shows that revision of the Young plan is common to the National Socialists, the Nationalists, the People's Conservatives, the People's party, the State party, and the Communists, and of these only the Liberal State party omitted to demand revision of the eastern frontiers as well. Herr Höpker-Aschoff, however, who may yet lead the State party, observed, in a recent speech, that the eastern frontiers were now 'the centre of interest and must be revised.' The Centre party have not yet issued their manifesto, but Dr. Kaas, their chairman, has now declared: 'We realise clearly that no German accepts the Young plan, and the idea of revision is before our eyes.' It is no less clear that the leaders of the Centre party consider revision of the eastern frontiers essential. The Social Democrats plainly consider all this clamour undesirable and premature, but they do not like the Young plan any more than anyone else. Their leaders are, however, being extremely careful to avoid these subjects. It remains to be seen whether they too will be stamped into demanding revision of the Young plan in their election manifesto, which they have not yet succeeded in producing.

3. The manifesto of the People's party gives almost a complete list of Germany's aims. It twice drags in President Hindenburg and claims to be carrying on the policy of 'our Stresemann who freed the Rhineland.' In fact, it shows an entire departure from the methods of their old leader. 'Our first tasks,' it declares, 'are: The continuation of Stresemann's national policy of freeing Germany; revision of the peace and the tribute treaties, the fight against the war guilt lie, the recovery of Germany's full equality of rights amongst the nations, the restoration of the Saar Territory to the Reich, the restoration of the eastern frontiers, the protection of German minorities, the recovery of colonial activity, help for the east in order to save the eastern provinces, and the maintenance and strengthening of the powers of resistance of the German people.' There is no direct reference to disarmament, the right to rearm, or the demilitarisation of the Rhineland, but the phrase 'equality of rights amongst the nations' is comprehensive.

4. Not to be outdone, the Communists have issued a violent manifesto in which they declare their intention of 'tearing up the Versailles Treaty and

the Young plan, which has reduced Germany to serfdom,' and they will annul all international debts, and reparation payments. Further, they will tear up all treaties arising out of the Versailles Treaty, such as the Treaty of Locarno and the German-Polish Treaty. The manifesto dates the slavery of the German workmen from the Versailles Treaty, and declares that the Communists will recognise no frontiers which have not been approved by the real majority of the workers in the various countries. This part of the manifesto is clearly designed to steal the thunder of the National Socialists, against whom the whole manifesto reveals extraordinary bitterness, and who, the Communists declare, only pretend to be against the Young plan, but are really supporting it by agreeing to duties and taxation. It has also won the approval of Herr Hugenberg, who has been moved to express his delight that the Communists are at last coming to reason. In saying this, Herr Hugenberg was clearly not thinking of the rest of the manifesto, which, for instance, declares that, on assuming power, the Communists will immediately make a political industrial treaty with Soviet Russia, by which the Soviets will receive the products of German industry, and give Germany foodstuffs and raw material in exchange. The German banks, the manifesto continues, are to be nationalised, and all monies lying in them belonging to foreign and German capitalists are to be confiscated.

5. Whilst all the parties are thus being stampeded into the clamouring for revision, the Social Democrats are having difficulties in formulating their manifesto, which is very late in appearing. It has always been obvious that a consideration in the acceptance by Germany of the Young plan was the promise of the premature evacuation of the Rhineland. The indecent haste with which the other parties are now demanding revision of the price agreed upon is equally obvious. The Social Democrats, who recognise more clearly than any of the other parties that this callous change of tone is not likely to encourage further concessions, clearly find the whole agitation disagreeable. This feeling is well expressed in an article contributed by Dr. Breitscheid to 'Vorwärts' this morning in which he makes some sharp criticism of the 'new methods' employed since Stresemann's death. The Social Democratic party, he declares, are supporting Stresemann's policy, and are still prepared to support anyone who will continue to carry it out. The demarcation of the eastern frontiers is, he points out, also distasteful to the Social Democrats, and they have grave doubts as to the possibility of carrying out the Young plan. They desire, above all, an active foreign policy. But they are opposed to an alteration of the methods, which seem to mean, in practice, that immediately after the evacuation of the Rhineland the difficult problem of the Polish Corridor is being dragged into the limelight and the revision of the Young plan is declared to be an immediate necessity. Dr. Breitscheid also bitterly criticises the methods adopted by Herr Treviranus, which are simply playing into the hands of Germany's enemies and arousing opposition everywhere: and he asks: 'Is Dr. Curtius really Minister for Foreign Affairs? One might well ask if his resignation is in question, as he continually keeps silent and lets Treviranus do all the talking.'



6. This criticism of Dr. Curtius is possibly a little unfair. He has not remained silent during this campaign, but largely because he has not allowed himself to be stampeded into adopting the new tone, his remarks have passed almost unnoticed. In a recent speech, for instance, he declared that the great majority of the German people supports a purposeful national policy of liberation, which, while developing the methods previously employed, also serves the idea of understanding; it seeks consideration for Germany's vital necessities, but above all it has the courage of patience. In a further speech yesterday Dr. Curtius observed:—

‘The overwhelming majority of the German people are behind Stresemann's foreign policy. The Government of the Reich are following this same course and adapting Stresemann's principles to subsequent developments. I set forth the main ideas of this foreign policy in my budget speech and in the reply to the memorandum from the French Government regarding the plan for Pan-Europa, and I am in complete accord with the Chancellor, who has once more defined these ideas in his first election speech at Cologne. I have no occasion to define my attitude to particular questions before the meeting of the League of Nations in September. Our collective attitude can only be this: to assure everywhere our national interests by following them with passionate love, but also with clear circumspection, and thereby honestly to serve the cause of peace and understanding among the nations. The highest lot which can fall to a people is to further the common weal of the nations while pursuing its own aims. I confine myself to these brief remarks and hope that all sides will maintain discipline as regards the question of foreign policy.’

7. Dr. Curtius has, indeed, not for a moment lost his poise, and he is also possessed of the ‘courage of patience,’ but the trouble is that he cannot make himself interesting enough, and at the moment he is being overlooked.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

### No. 319

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received September 8)*

*No. 744 [C 6855/140/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, September 5, 1930

The two outstanding features of the present electoral campaign, in which twenty-four parties are participating, are the apathy of the general public and the pronounced activity of the National Socialists. The apathy of the general public may be largely ascribed to the fact that the belief is widely held that this election can produce no result and that another election will have to be held in the late autumn. To a great extent, too, the excessive attention which has been paid to foreign policy at a time when internal reforms are obviously more immediate may be attributed to the attempts of the party leaders to arouse some interest in the electorate. In the meanwhile, the activity of the National Socialists has reached such intensity as

to cause serious dissensions within their own camp, as a result of which some curious developments, such as the existence of Communist cells in their 'storm detachments,' have been brought to light.

2. The National Socialists claim that they represent a movement and not a party. The movement is a new and vigorous one and obviously appeals to youth; and now, during the electoral campaign, its youthfulness and vigour are obviously appealing to all those in Germany who are feeling dissatisfied. In fact, they are often described as the party of the dissatisfied. Their electoral methods are themselves original and often ingenious. Despite their large Berlin headquarters, with its thirty-two rooms, they do not dispose of large funds. But they seem to have found some sources of supply, for they are obviously spending money in distributing large quantities of pamphlets, leaflets and placards. A cheaper and easier method and, for very young men, a more amusing one, is to splash the swastika in red paint together with the number of the party electoral list on fences, posts and pavements. They also have little rubber stamps with which they stamp their sign and number on motor buses, tube trains and other vehicles. On one occasion, when the owner of a bookstall was not looking, they succeeded in stamping their sign and number on nearly all of his newspapers and publications. Reports from other parts of the country also show that they are extremely active everywhere in devising means of attracting attention.

3. They themselves now claim that the 'active nucleus' of the party is over 300,000 and they are confident that in the election they will gain over 3 million votes and some fifty or sixty seats in the Reichstag. To me, personally, this number seems somewhat high, and it may be assumed that National Socialist estimates would be on the high side. There are, however, many people here who consider that they will win fifty or sixty seats, partly from the Nationalists and the People's party, and partly by bringing to the polls some of the 10 million odd voters who last election failed to vote. However this may be, while large sections of the electorate seem apathetic, the National Socialists are very much alive and interested, and they seem likely at least, therefore, to gain a number of seats out of proportion to their real strength in the country as compared with that of other parties.

4. The dissensions within the National Socialist camp have now, however, introduced a new factor. The trouble began with the revolt of the 'storm detachments' under the leadership of an ex-police captain called Stennes against Dr. Goebbels, the leader of the party in Berlin. These storm detachments are said to contain '20,000 men specially trained but not politically educated.' According to the press, the storm detachments appealed direct to Hitler against the attitude adopted by Dr. Goebbels and the Berlin party committee, whom they considered too moderate and too inclined to work with the capitalists, *i.e.*, presumably Hugenberg. Hitler, who had recently announced his willingness to work with the Constitution when it suited him, returned their manifesto to them, 'as he could not deal with rebels.' Several stormy meetings and discussions between the opposing forces in Berlin were held, at one of which, according to the 'Nationaler Sozialist,' the party

manager attempted to force Stennes, at the point of the revolver, to give up his demands. The news reached the local storm detachment, who foregathered and attempted to enter the building, whereupon the headquarters defence force opened fire on them, wounding several, of whom four severely. Last Sunday night twenty-five members of the disgruntled storm detachments had more success. They invaded the party headquarters, succeeded in forcing their way in and smashing everything to pieces in the large offices over which Rathenau, as War Food Minister, once presided. The headquarters guard were placed in the ignominious position of having to summon the police, who arrived in large numbers, overpowered the invaders and locked them up. Now a new quarrel has arisen as to whether the legal costs of both sides in the action being brought by Dr. Goebbels against them can properly be charged to party costs.

5. Thereupon Hitler hastened to Berlin, where he called a meeting of the members of the dissatisfied storm detachments, at which over 2,000 were said to have been present. He announced that he himself would take over the leadership of the storm detachments, and he seems to have been successful in winning them back to allegiance to the party. To do so, however, he was obliged to make concessions which in themselves are revealing. He promised to give them greater influence in the party administration after the elections. In future, too, members of the storm detachments are to pay smaller contributions than other members of the party and will have wider privileges. They will be granted compensation for legal costs and costs arising out of political conflicts, special compensation being granted to the injured or wounded; and in particular the costs of the legal process arising out of the recent serious fracas in Roentgental are to be paid out of the party chest. It is significant that these concessions had to be given because the storm detachments persistently asserted that the various acts of rowdiness, and those at Roentgental in particular, were committed on the orders of the party leaders.

6. This storm in a tea-cup has further revealed the existence of a number of Communist groups within the ranks of the storm detachments. The Horst Wessel detachment, for instance, has been dissolved because over 200 Communists are said to have been found in it. It may be that these are just roughs who have gone over from the Communists or, as is alleged, that the Communists are deliberately inserting their men into the storm detachments. But when it is a question of roughs who attack law-abiding Reichsbanner youths from behind in the dark with hammers and knives, the distinction is obviously difficult to draw. It is significant, too, that when Dr. Goebbels attempted to address a refractory meeting of the storm detachments, they greeted him by singing the 'Internationale.'

7. The various acts of rowdiness, often resulting in bloodshed, in which National Socialists are reported from all over the country to be involved obviously offer the Communists opportunities to further their ends; and those who still hope some day to bring about a Soviet revolution in Germany must surely be pleased with the way the storm detachments of their greatest

enemies are now behaving. It remains to be seen, however, what effect these serious dissensions within the party, this rowdiness and this smell of communism will have upon the better class supporters of the National Socialist movement, whose number is not insignificant; and also what effect it will have upon that nebulous group of dissatisfied people who have hitherto been attracted by the freshness and youth and vigour of the movement.

8. Hitler's problem now seems to be how to get rid of these unruly storm detachments. He obviously can do nothing before the election, but rumours are about that he has pledged himself to certain of his financial supporters to dissolve the storm detachments immediately the election is over.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

No. 320

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received September 15)*

*No. 767 [C 7019/4/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, September 12, 1930

With reference to my despatch No. 723<sup>1</sup> of the 29th August, I have the honour to report that during the present election campaign in this country the question of the reparation liabilities of Germany has received little serious attention, apart from the general reference thereto in the party manifestoes reported in my despatch under reference. In particular, there has been little or no attempt to show that the declaration of a moratorium in accordance with the provisions of the Young plan would be of benefit to Germany in the present circumstances of economic and financial difficulty.

2. The question has, however, become more prominent during the last few days owing, perhaps, to reports appearing in the press of the 9th September that the Young Loan quotations on the London Stock Exchange had dropped sharply owing to rumours that it was the intention of the German Government to proclaim such a moratorium. These rumours were characterised in the press as ridiculous, and apparently had little or no permanent effect upon financial opinion.

3. The whole question was, however, prominently referred to by the Minister of Finance at a political meeting of the Staatspartei held in Berlin on the 11th September. After discussing at some length the financial situation of the Government, and incidentally contradicting rumours that the German Government had been offered a French loan of R.M. 2½ milliard if they would support M. Briand's plan for the federation of Europe, and that the Reich would again find itself in difficulties in paying official salaries before the end of the financial year, Dr. Dietrich went on to discuss the reparation question. Referring to the outbursts of Hugenberg, Hitler and the Communists as 'quack solutions' which, by repudiating reparations, would settle everything, he traced the history of the various settlements and showed the progressive gains secured by Germany from Versailles to The

<sup>1</sup> No. 318.

Hague. These had come about because Germany's former opponents realised the impossibility of their earlier demands. Events would take place in future under the same compulsion as in the past. Germany could only pay by the export of goods and if other parties were not willing to take sufficient goods from Germany then Germany's representatives would again sit at the conference table. Moreover, it was becoming better understood abroad that Germany's reparation exports were a principal cause of trouble in the world economic system. If Germany, instead of paying these enormous sums year by year without counter value, were to make purchases therewith, the trade of England and other industrial countries would flourish again. The question was not governed by Germany's willingness to pay but by the readiness of others to receive. It was difficult for a responsible Minister to discuss these matters, but he asked his hearers to draw their own conclusions from previous events. He warned them against thinking that these matters could be settled arbitrarily. If that were possible, then the British, who in the next ten years had to pay more to the United States than they received from Germany, France and their other debtors, would long ago have cancelled the whole affair. Even victorious France received only a small part of the war damages flowing to her.

4. Dr. Dietrich continued that he took the opportunity to state that there was not a word of truth in the report that Germany was seeking a moratorium. He emphasized that all these rumours and assertions were calculated to damage the credit of Germany just in that moment in which they had once more reached the first rank of the commercial Powers of Europe.

5. The utterances of Dr. Dietrich on this subject appear to be wholly satisfactory. I might perhaps add that no such rumours as those to which reference was made by him have reached this Embassy, and I have naturally not sought to discuss them with anybody in an official position. I assume, in fact, that references to the possibility of the declaration of a moratorium by Germany are undesirable, lest the impression should be conveyed that Great Britain would not be surprised if such a step were taken. If, on the other hand, the question is forced upon me, I should propose to take the attitude that the declaration of a moratorium would automatically involve the calling together of the Special Advisory Committee provided for in the Young Plan and that it is obvious that the world is very far from ripe for such a step at the present moment.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

No. 321

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received September 15)*  
*No. 103 Telegraphic [C 7040/140/18]*

BERLIN, September 15, 1930

According to the press the general election yesterday passed off quietly on the whole all over the country. Weather was fine. It is stated that for

the whole Reich an average of 85 per cent. of the electorate voted. In some districts as many as 90 per cent. went to the poll, percentage of electors being highest since revolution in 1918.

The feature of the election is remarkable success of National Socialists or Fascisti, who appear to have polled nearly 6,500,000 votes, which would entitle them to 107 seats in Reichstag, this making them second strongest party in that body.<sup>1</sup> An outside estimate before the election of their probable gains gave a figure of between fifty and sixty seats (see my despatch No. 744<sup>2</sup> of 5th September), but they have doubled this estimate. Their gains appear to have been made at the expense of the Nationalist and moderate parties. Social Democrats remain strongest party. They polled 8,500,000 votes, which will entitle them to 143 seats, a loss of ten seats as compared with the last elections. Communists polled over 4,500,000 votes, which will give them seventy-six seats, a gain of twenty-two seats. Centre increased their strength by seven seats and will be entitled to sixty-nine seats. All other *bourgeois* parties have lost, especially German People's party, whose representation has been reduced from forty-five to twenty-six seats. German Nationalists, Hugenberg's party, as a result of split last year, and this election, have lost thirty-two seats, but they will still have forty-one seats, and, assuming that they go into opposition with the National Socialists and Communists, these three parties will command 224 seats as against 349 for all other parties together, including Social Democratic and Centre parties. Treviranus's party has been reduced to five seats.

Foregoing figures are provisional.

<sup>1</sup> The National Socialist representation in the previous Reichstag had consisted of 12 seats.

<sup>2</sup> No. 319.

## No. 322

*Mr. R. H. Campbell (Paris) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received September 17)*  
*No. 149 Telegraphic [C 7070/140/18]*

PARIS, *September 16, 1930*

Although it was generally predicted here that the extreme parties on the Right and Left would gain a number of seats, the result of the elections in Germany has come as a disagreeable surprise and is viewed with deep uneasiness. The dominant note is that a turning-point has been reached in German history which may have far-reaching effects on international foreign policy, and that the situation requires careful and firm handling on the part of France.

The victory of the National Socialists has clearly weakened the position of M. Briand. He is the object of bitter attacks in Nationalist circles for the alleged failure of his policy of Franco-German *rapprochement*, and the desirability of his early resignation is voiced in certain organs of the Right.

Even those organs which have consistently supported his policy admit that a serious situation has arisen in Germany, though not so desperate as to endanger the republican régime. They attribute the swing to Right and

Left to the internal economic difficulties in Germany rather than to reasons of foreign policy, and express confidence in the ability of the German Socialists to weather the storm by the formation of a coalition Government based on the Centre and Left.

No. 323

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received September 22)*  
*No. 776 [C 7156/140/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, September 18, 1930

I paid a visit to-day to Herr Weismann, the Prussian Secretary of State, in order to obtain his views regarding the situation brought about by the result of the recent general elections in this country. I reminded him that several months ago he had predicted that at the next elections the National Socialists would secure some fifty to sixty seats in the Reichstag.

2. Herr Weismann said that he had warned the Chancellor of the risk he ran in bringing about general elections at the present juncture, but the Chancellor had been convinced that an appeal to the electorate would produce a working majority for the parties supporting the Government. Dr. Brüning was apt to think that other politicians were as straight as he himself was. As regards the National Socialists, Herr Weismann had, on the eve of the election, told his friends that this party would, in his opinion, win some seventy to eighty seats. He had been unprepared, however, for its sweeping success, which he thought was a source of embarrassment to it. To begin with, the party had not put up 107 candidates. It was true that several of the National Socialists had been elected for six or seven different districts, but it would be necessary to fill a number of the seats which they had won. He looked forward with some curiosity to the sort of people who would be chosen to represent the party in the Reichstag. He had noticed that, since the elections, the National Socialist press had been very restrained, the party being obviously concerned to show the public that it was fit to take office.

3. I enquired of Herr Weismann whether he knew the source from which the National Socialists had drawn the funds for their election campaign. He replied that these funds must come from Russia, thereby confirming the statement to that effect alleged by the press to have been made by M. Besedowski, the former counsellor of the Soviet Embassy at Paris. Herr Weismann asserted that the National Socialists must have spent some 8 million or 10 million marks on their campaign. The heavy industrials were not in a position to furnish these funds. A few Jews might have contributed, in spite of the fact that the National Socialists are very hostile to that race. He could think of no other source from which the National Socialists could have derived their resources. It was obviously in the interest of the Soviet authorities to create a state of confusion in Germany. I observed that it ought to be possible for the Government of the Reich to ascertain whether the money had, in fact, been supplied from Russian sources.

4. Herr Weismann affirmed quite categorically that there was no chance of a second election. If there were one, the National Socialists would certainly lose a large number of seats. Their present success was an ephemeral one, in his opinion. It was the result of a general feeling of discontent with present economic conditions and disgust with the party squabbles in the Reichstag.

5. Turning to the situation brought about by the elections, he said that he had discussed it privately both with the Chancellor and with the Prussian Prime Minister. He had told both that, in his opinion, the Centre party must come to a working arrangement with the Social Democrats. In fact, he was convinced that all the parties ranging from the Social Democrats on the Left to the tiny Treviranus group on the Right would be forced to work together, leaving the National Socialists, Hugenberg's followers and the Communists in opposition. If this did not come about, the moderate parties were done for. It was true that, without Hugenberg's group, the Government parties would not have the majority necessary to put through a scheme of electoral reform. But the Hugenberg Nationalists had for a long time past been in favour of such a scheme, and it might be possible to get the new Reichstag to adopt it. The smaller parties together controlled sixty-four seats, and a coalition between them, the Centre and the Social Democrats would give a small majority over the three Opposition parties.

6. But, in order to ensure co-operation with these smaller parties, it was essential that Dr. Brüning should continue in power, for the smaller parties of the Right would not work under a Chancellor drawn from the Social Democratic party. That party would, however, have to have an important post in the Government, and he suggested that Herr Hermann Müller, the late Chancellor, should be appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs. He said the appointment would inspire confidence in France and in the countries surrounding Germany. I said that Dr. Curtius had, at The Hague, and, more recently, at Geneva, made the acquaintance of the leading statesmen of foreign countries and had probably acquired their confidence. His recent speech at Geneva had, according to press accounts, been well received. Herr Weismann admitted this, and said that the idea that the late Chancellor should take over the Ministry for Foreign Affairs was his personal idea. The Social Democrats would not, he said, wish to take over the Ministry of Finance, or the Ministry of Labour. They would, he thought, be forced to accept the Emergency Measures. In any event, it would be necessary for the Chancellor to decide the basis on which he proposed to carry on the government of the country before the Reichstag met, and he thought that this task would be undertaken by the end of the present month.

7. He concluded by saying that he was not pessimistic about the situation, but he more than once emphasised the absolute necessity for all parties except the extreme Right and Left to combine together for the good of the country.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD



*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received September 29)*  
*No. 791 [C 7341/140/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, September 25, 1930

My despatch No. 781<sup>1</sup> of the 23rd instant will have reported the results on the Stock Exchange of the rumours which have obtained credence abroad, as well as in this country, in connexion with a 'Putsch' which might be engineered by the National Socialists. I have noticed that the correspondents in Berlin of even leading English papers have sent home somewhat sensational reports on the subject. In their estimate of the situation the writers of the reports referred to probably had in mind the recent changes in the Higher Command of the Reichswehr, as also the trial at Leipzig of the three young officers on a charge of fomenting a National Socialist conspiracy in the army. In this connexion I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a memorandum<sup>2</sup> by the military attaché at this Embassy.

2. It has seemed to me clear from the first that, for two reasons, no National Socialist 'Putsch' was to be feared at the present moment. In the first place, the National Socialists were taken aback by the sweeping extent of their gains at the polls, and they were unprepared for anything like the success which they achieved. Secondly, the fact that they now constitute the second largest party in the Reichstag must tend to create a certain sense of responsibility which their previous representation of only twelve Deputies did not entail. The National Socialists make no secret of their claim to participate in the government of the country, but, in order to do so, they must give some proof of their fitness or, at all events, avoid action which would be considered as unfitting them for that object. A 'Putsch' would put them out of court in the opinion of the majority of steady and sober-minded Germans. Nor could they, I believe, engineer a 'Putsch' with any prospect of success in present circumstances.

3. The trouble with the National Socialists will, I think, begin if and when they find that they are excluded from participation in the government of the country. It would be risky to predict what form the trouble will take, but they will certainly make themselves objectionable in the Reichstag. In his evidence at the trial at Leipzig mentioned above, Hitler stated *inter alia* that he was much too old a soldier to attempt to tamper with the army. On the other hand, he openly avowed that if his party came into power it

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed. In this memorandum Colonel Marshall-Cornwall stated his view that the loyalty of the German Army to the Weimar Constitution depended on the control of the situation by the President. "The Army Command is now passing into the control of a group of the younger and more pushful generals who tolerate the Weimar Constitution and all that it stands for only so long as the field-marshal remains as the representative Head of the State." Colonel Marshall-Cornwall wrote that during the recent German army manoeuvres he had discussed the election results with many German officers. "They were all amazed and rather frightened by the National Socialist success. "It is the *Jugendbewegung*," they said; "it can't be stopped."

would break down the Treaty of Versailles and all that flowed from it. I am transmitting in my despatch No. 792<sup>1</sup> of the 26th September a summary of Hitler's statements at the trial in question.

4. The more one reflects over the results of the recent elections in Germany, and the more one talks to persons of various shades of political opinion, the clearer it becomes that a large number of those persons who voted for the National Socialists were inspired by impatience, not to say disgust, with the ineffectiveness of the political parties in the Reichstag. Difficult economic conditions were also an important factor, and the anti-Semitic slogan appealed to many voters. Jews are held by many to be responsible for the corruption in municipal affairs, as evidenced by the recent Sklarek <sup>2</sup> scandal in Berlin. I am informed that, as the wireless, on the night of the elections, gave out in the restaurants and cafés the results coming in from the different electoral districts, the Jews present showed evidence of increasing concern. I have it on the best authority that one of the most prominent Jewish bankers in Berlin received an assurance of personal safety from Herr Goebbels, the leader of the National Socialists in the Reichstag. Another Jewish banker is stated to have subscribed to the funds of the National Socialists from disgust with or apprehension at Social Democratic finance. In this connexion I venture to doubt whether the National Socialists did, in fact, draw their funds from Russian sources. They were more probably financed to a certain extent by heavy industrials.

5. A curious feature of the elections which came under my own observation was that not one of the German servants at this Embassy voted. An intelligent mechanic, whom I employ to drive a motor boat, said that, as all the political parties had proved so hopelessly ineffective, he saw no reason for voting. At the beginning of the war the Emperor William said: 'I know no parties, only Germans.' A wit, inspired by the recent elections, has parodied this saying in the sense that 'he knew no Germans, but only parties'.

6. The Chancellor very wisely, it would seem, decided to remain in office and to continue the work of financial reform. His resignation at this juncture would have only increased the confusion in the political situation and the apprehensions of a 'Putsch.' He is keeping his own counsel, and has not given any indication of the basis on which he proposes to carry on the government of the country. The Cabinet have met several times to consider the Unemployment Insurance Fund and analogous questions. My impression is that, before entering into serious negotiations with the leaders of the different parties, Herr Brüning will publish the programme of his Government and await the nature of its reception by the different parties. He will then be in a position to see which of the parties are willing to co-operate with him.

<sup>1</sup> No. 325.

<sup>2</sup> In the autumn of 1929 the firm of Messrs. Sklarek, which held a monopoly for the supply of ready-made clothing (uniforms, &c.), to the municipality of Berlin, was found to have obtained some 9 or 10 million marks by means of forged or falsified order forms.

7. In theory, several courses are open to Herr Brüning. He might either attempt to govern in co-operation with the Right, including the National Socialists and the Hugenberg group, but he would in this case meet with strong opposition from members of his own party, and, unless he could rope in the Economic and People's parties, he would be in a minority. Or he might attempt to carry on as a minority Government, seeking support from the Right or the Left according to the nature of the measures he thought fit to submit to the Reichstag. Or, again, he might seek the active co-operation of the Social Democrats and the other parties, excluding the Communists, Hitlerites and the Hugenberg group. The Economic party, numbering twenty-three, appears to be the deciding factor in the possibility of this combination. Active co-operation with the Social Democrats would, no doubt, oblige the latter to accept certain unpopular measures in the financial domain, whilst to govern with the toleration of that party would be a much more difficult task.

8. The remarks made by Hitler at the trial at Leipzig had a depressing effect on the Stock Exchange here, which had begun to recover from the rumours about a 'Putsch' which were current earlier in the week. In a week from now the political situation will be somewhat clearer.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

#### No. 325

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received September 29)*

*No. 792 [C 7342/1607/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, September 26, 1930

The event of the moment in Germany is a speech made yesterday by Hitler before the Leipzig Court before which, as reported in paragraphs 3 and 4 of my despatch No. 780<sup>1</sup> of the 22nd September, three officers are appearing on charges of attempting to form National Socialist cells within the army. One of the accused called Hitler as a witness to testify 'that the National Socialist German Workers' party pursues its aims by legal means, that it does not aspire to upset the Constitution or the State, that it has not called upon its members, in 1929 also, to upset the Government'. The accused requested Hitler to explain on broad lines the genesis of the party.

2. Since the election Hitler has been keeping very quiet and has been obviously endeavouring to show that the National Socialist movement is perfectly harmless and respectable and fit to share in the government of the country. He naturally jumped at this heaven-sent opportunity to make a propaganda speech which has been given the widest publicity throughout the land. Whatever else he may have thereby achieved he made his intentions regarding the peace treaties perfectly clear and he gained some magnificent publicity. As reported in my despatch No. 791<sup>2</sup> of the 25th September the immediate result was another sharp fall on the German Stock Exchange.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

<sup>2</sup> No. 324.

3. Hitler began by stating that he was born at Braunau in 1889 and possessed no nationality. He had served on the Western Front from autumn 1914 to 1918 as a German soldier and had thereby lost his citizenship. At the time of the collapse he had been in hospital suffering from gas poisoning. He had then become convinced that the only way to deal with 'the terror' was through a new party under a firm leadership. He had been a soldier too long to believe that it was possible to fight with illegal organisations against an army or a police force. The founding of the defence organisations, which were subsequently called 'Storm Detachments,' was to protect the movement against the Left. At no time were they intended for use against the State.

4. When Hitler then proceeded to claim that the events of 1923 took place against his wish, he was sharply reminded by the presiding judge of the decision of the Munich court, which condemned him to five years confinement in a fortress for high treason. Various points from the judgment were also read out declaring that the Hitler movement meant the destruction of the Weimar Constitution and the rooting out of the spirit of pacifism. Further statements of Hitler's made in September and October 1923 were read out to the effect that the object of the movement was the restoration of Greater Germany and the establishment by force of a directorate (*sic*).

5. Continuing, Hitler declared that the storm detachments in 1923 had been armed and put into barracks not at his wish but at the desire of officials because things had gone so far that war was threatening between Bavaria and the German Reich. In 1925 he decided that the movement must be brought back to its original basis and he ordered the complete disarming of the storm detachments, and further took steps to see that they assumed an entirely non-military character. Raising his voice Hitler then declared: 'We have no interest in seeing the army dissolved.' He then became very worked up and after being checked by the presiding judge he added that naturally a movement which sought to capture the State thought first and foremost of the power of defence. The party would, therefore, take steps to see that out of the Reichswehr the great German citizen army would develop.

6. The presiding judge thereupon intervened with the suggestion that reading between the lines of his statements it seemed that Hitler was not attempting to achieve his objects by purely legal means. In reply, Hitler claimed that he had given orders that if the party ordinances conflicted with the law they were not to be carried out. For disobedience of these orders numerous members of the party had been expelled, including Otto Strasser, the editor of the 'Nationaler Sozialist,' who had played with the idea of revolution. Those, he said, who spoke of a National Socialist revolution meant a revolution of the spirit, but here Hitler suddenly let himself go. 'I can assure you,' he declared, 'that if the National Socialist movement is victorious in its fight, then there will be a National Socialist Court of Justice, and there will be atonement for November 1918 and heads will roll in the dust.' At this there were loud shouts of 'Bravo!' from his supporters in the galleries.

7. Hitler was then asked what he meant by 'German National revolution.'

In reply, he stated that this was meant in a purely political sense. The National Socialists did not mean to prepare for it with illegal means. If they had two or three more elections then the National Socialist movement would have a majority in the Reichstag, and then they would prepare for a national revolution which was to raise Germany out of serfdom. 'Germany,' he declared, 'was muzzled by the peace treaties. The whole of the German legislation is to-day nothing else than an attempt to anchor the peace treaties in the German people. The National Socialists do not regard these treaties as law, but as something imposed by force. They were not prepared to burden future generations which were completely guiltless with them. When we defend ourselves against them with all possible means, then we find ourselves on the way to revolution.'

8. The presiding judge then interposed: 'Also with illegal means?' Hitler replied: 'I am assuming that we have won, then we shall fight against the treaties with all means, including means which, in the opinion of the world, will be regarded as illegal means.' When asked how he hoped to establish the 'Third Realm,' Hitler replied that the Constitution merely prescribed the battlefield and not the object in view. The National Socialist party would enter into existing legal institutions and would in this way make itself a decisive factor. But this it would do in a constitutional way.

9. Finally, Hitler declared that the army was responsible for the fate of the people, but that it was no longer in keeping with the times. The soldier must carry with him the thoughts of the people. The army would soon see that his party wished to save the German people from slavery and poverty.

10. When making these statements Hitler was not speaking on oath. It is now announced in the press that he is to be cross-examined on oath, so that he will have a further opportunity to stand in the limelight. Already he would seem to have outmanœuvred the authorities who instituted the proceedings against the Reichswehr officers, and he may even succeed in making himself a popular hero.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

No. 326

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received October 13)*

*No. 820 [C 7651/140/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, October 10, 1930

Although the Reichstag is to meet on the 13th instant, so far as can be ascertained nothing definite is known as to the basis on which the Chancellor proposes to carry on the government of the country. I am informed, however, by a prominent Social Democrat in a position to know, that Dr. Brüning will be able to count on the co-operation of the Social Democratic party in the execution of his programme of financial reform, and that the party will oppose a vote of want of confidence in him. This presumably means that the Chancellor will be able to carry on the Government with at least the

toleration of the Social Democratic party and possibly with the support of the parties represented in his present Cabinet. He is anxious to maintain his present Cabinet intact, but a great deal of intrigue is going on against Dr. Curtius, and it is even reported that the People's party wish the latter to leave the Cabinet. Meanwhile, the newly formed State Party has been disrupted and some of its members are looking about for affiliation with some other party. Thus, the political situation may be said to be still in a state of confusion.

2. The Chancellor has spent the last four or five days in receiving the representatives of various parties. He asked the various parties to send their representatives, but did not invite the latter by name. This led to the unexpected appearance of Herr Hitler as the representative of the National Socialists. I am informed that the Chancellor had no alternative but to receive Hitler, although he is not a German subject. The interview only lasted a few minutes, as it was clear from the start that there was nothing in common between the Chancellor's proposed policy and that of the National Socialists. I also learn on very good authority that it was suggested to Dr. Braun, the Prussian Prime Minister, that Hitler should be forbidden to set foot on Prussian territory. Dr. Braun was unwilling to go as far as this, but stated that if and when Hitler committed any act which might be considered as subversive, he would be immediately expelled from Prussia.

3. General von Seeckt's action in attending the recent Stahlhelm rally at Coblenz in uniform has met with very unfavourable criticism from Germans of moderate views.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

## No. 327

*Letter from Mr. O. Sargent to Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin)*

[C 7706/16/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 14, 1930*

We have recently been struck by the sudden and, (as far as we are concerned) unexpected emergence of a demand in Germany for the abolition of the demilitarisation restrictions in the Rhineland. The question was mentioned in your telegram No. 99<sup>1</sup> of August 16 in which Dr. Wirth was reported as saying that 'the Rhineland was not really free owing to its being subject to certain servitudes'. Poincaré has commented on this aspect of German policy (see our despatch No. 800<sup>2</sup> of August 19) and the matter again came up at the recent Stahlhelm meeting at Coblenz when the Mayor was reported in your despatch No. 815<sup>3</sup> of the 8th September<sup>4</sup> as saying that Germany can never be a free country until these restrictions had been removed. I believe too that during the election campaign it was reported in the press that various parties included 'undemilitarisation' in their programme.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. See No. 317, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed.

<sup>3</sup> Not printed.

<sup>4</sup> This should read '8th October'.

It would be interesting to know, in view of the fact that Germany may now be going to adopt a 'forward' foreign policy, whether this demand (i.e. abolition of the demilitarisation restrictions) is likely to figure in the programme together with the older favourites which we discussed in the spring when Vansittart's memorandum<sup>1</sup> was in preparation, i.e. the revision of the Eastern frontiers, and German rearmament.

The question affects us directly moreover since 'undemilitarisation' would cut at the very roots of Locarno.

ORME SARGENT

<sup>1</sup> See No. 317, note 5.

### No. 328

*Letter from Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. Sargent (Received October 21)*  
[C 7869/16/18]

BERLIN, October 16, 1930

In reply to your letter<sup>1</sup> of the 14th October regarding the question of the undemilitarisation of the Rhineland, I would like to refer you, in the first place, to paragraph 4 of my despatch No. 681<sup>2</sup> of August 18 last. You will see from it that Bülow said to me that, perhaps in the distant future, the German Government might work for a bilateral application of the servitudes at present imposed on the Rhineland alone.

The fact that no sooner had the Rhineland been evacuated than responsible German Ministers and other persons reminded the nation that the Rhineland was not really free, is only another instance, to my mind, of the German habit of ventilating grievances. No sooner is one grievance redressed than the Germans come forward with another. But I very much doubt whether the abolition of the demilitarisation restrictions in the Rhineland would figure on a par with the other items of the German programme such as the restoration of the Saar, revision of the Eastern frontier, etc. The return of territory or a territorial readjustment is something which the ordinary German can understand and strive for, but the removal of the servitudes imposed on the Rhineland would not make such an appeal to his imagination.

It is true, I believe, that, during the election campaign, various parties spoke of the full restoration of German sovereignty which would, of course, imply the abolition of the demilitarisation restrictions. The Germans also might, when they next talk about disarmament at Geneva, argue that as none of their neighbours have disarmed it would not seem logical to maintain the demilitarisation restrictions in the Rhineland. But this, as you say, would cut at the roots of Locarno and I do not think that the Brüning Government, which includes Curtius, will raise this question for the present.

HORACE RUMBOLD

<sup>1</sup> No. 327.

<sup>2</sup> No. 317.

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received October 27)*

*No. 851 [C 7996/140/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, October 23, 1930

The present moment seems appropriate to review the political situation by the light of the recent proceedings in the Reichstag, which ended in a considerable success for the Brüning Government.

2. It is generally considered that the Chancellor's position has been greatly strengthened in the Reichstag and that his political prestige has increased in the country. Those who, like myself, listened to the ministerial declaration which he read out on the 13th instant, could not help being impressed by his calm demeanour in the face of constant and unmannerly interruptions, mainly by the Communists. He only showed resentment on one occasion, namely, when his colleague, General Groener, was stigmatised as a traitor. The Chancellor then left the House, and intimated that he would not return to it until the offending member had withdrawn his remark. Dr. Brüning likewise drew the attention of the President of the Reichstag to the impropriety of the language used by the member in question. The Chancellor has, in fact, revealed himself as one of the few statesmen to be found in the Germany of to-day.

3. Another satisfactory feature of the recent proceedings in the Reichstag was the decision of the moderate parties to support the Brüning Cabinet. No doubt this was largely inspired by fear of the consequences which would have been entailed by Dr. Brüning's defeat. This might have meant another dissolution of the Reichstag, the last state of which might have been worse than the first. It is doubtful whether the Chancellor expected to get majorities of eighty votes for the proposal to pass to the Order of the Day and for other motions. No small credit attaches to the Social Democratic party for its manifestation of patriotism. The leaders of that party, and in particular the last Chancellor, Herr Hermann Müller, have taken a long view of the situation and have realised the necessity of supporting the Brüning Government, even although such action may lose the party some votes. For some time past the reproach has been levelled at Hermann Müller that he is in reality a *bourgeois*, and I am informed that his influence with his party is not as great as it was formerly. As time goes on, the Social Democratic leaders may find it increasingly difficult to control their followers. Some people maintain that the whole party is taking on a *bourgeois* tinge.

4. The National Socialists, having let off a certain amount of steam and made themselves somewhat ridiculous in the initial proceedings of the Reichstag, now show signs of settling down. The country as a whole has recovered from the shock of their successes at the recent elections. One of their members has been appointed one of the Vice-Presidents of the Reichstag, and thus invested with a position of responsibility which should have a sobering influence. The grotesque points in the programme of the National Socialists, namely, those advocating the confiscation of the fortunes of Jews and war



profiteers, tend, however, to discredit the party, which has not so far put forward a single constructive proposal. Herr Löbe, whose experience as President of the Reichstag extends over several years, handled the House very well, realising, as he did, that a large number of the new members must necessarily be unacquainted with the procedure and rules of the House.

5. It is generally thought that the Brüning Cabinet will continue in office until the spring, but that fresh elections will then be inevitable. By that time the National Socialists will have had an opportunity of showing their mettle. As there is little or no chance of their being able to fulfil the promises which they made to the electorate, they may well lose considerably at the next election. But their recent success at the polls is undoubtedly calculated to stimulate any Government to pursue a forward foreign policy, which would probably include an ultimate demand for the revision of the Young plan.

6. As the House is at present constituted, there is no chance of the Government obtaining a two-thirds majority for proposals such as the raising of the age of voters, &c.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

#### No. 330

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received October 27)*

*No. 852 [C 7997/1.40/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, *October 24, 1930*

I have the honour to transmit herewith a note made by the financial adviser of a conversation he had with the president of the Reichsbank on the 22nd October.

2. Mr. Rowe-Dutton points out that Dr. Luther was obviously anxious to impress two things upon him: (1) That the Government programme of reform had so imposed itself upon the Reichstag of the country that it would go through, even if the present Cabinet were to fall; and (2) that the National Socialists were going through a transitional stage involving demagoguery, rowdiness and absurd resolutions, but that they had indicated their recognition of the form of government, of the rights and duties of the Reichstag, and of its standing orders, and that their ultimate co-operation with, or participation in, the Government was a possibility which must be taken into consideration.

3. This view as to the future of the National Socialists is of particular interest, and it is shared by a number of people with whom I and my staff have come into contact. The avowed enemies of the National Socialists claim that they have discredited themselves by the window-smashing on the 13th October and by their rowdiness in the Reichstag. The broken glass may cut their feet and impede their progress, but there is at least a doubt about the real responsibility for it. As for their rowdiness, it was only necessary to attend the Reichstag to see how theatrical it was. They were rowdy

largely because they were full of high spirits and because they felt it was expected of them, and several would-be angry and violent outbursts went off ill-timed or at half-cock accompanied by sideways glances and sheepish grins. Whilst time will show whether the National Socialists are losing ground, it is certainly the case that, however much the political situation may have solidified as a result of the Chancellor's success and the Government programme, none of the other political parties are gaining.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

ENCLOSURE IN No. 330

*Note of an Interview with Reichsbankpräsident Dr. Luther, October 22, 1930*

I called on Dr. Luther to-day to fulfil an appointment provisionally arranged a month ago, but postponed owing to his absence from Berlin.

He plunged at once into a very vigorous speech on the political situation. The general election, disturbing as it had been at first sight, had had two positive results. First, the National Socialists, 107 strong, were forced into an attitude of responsibility. For ten years they had carried on an intensive propaganda; the phrases and attitudes of that period could not disappear overnight. But one must look rather for the appearance of new and responsible lines of thought. Hitler had orated in the Leipzig treason trial like a demagogue; but the important words of his speech were 'legal means,' not 'rolling heads.' The Nazis would hasten to bring absurd motions before the Reichstag, such as the recent motion concerning nationalisation of banks; they could not, after all their propaganda, do less; but the sooner they got these motions brought in and rejected, the sooner they could drop them. They were merely the transitional stage—the pouring of cold water into the hot broth of the Nazi programme. Meanwhile they had given proof of their recognition of the form of government, of the rights and duties of the Reichstag, and even of its Standing Orders. Their progress was visible and considerable.

The second positive result of the election was the development not of a Government majority, but of an 'adjournment majority.' Even before the election, the prospect of a homogeneous majority, whether Right or Left, was almost hopeless. The last few weeks had evolved something which, he agreed, came near to a new form of government, namely, a majority which, without binding itself to the Cabinet, voted for adjournment, so as to allow the Cabinet to carry on with the financial programme. This programme had acquired a living force of its own, independent of the Cabinet. He was no political prophet, but he was convinced that the programme would go through, and would go through with the present Cabinet. But even supposing the worst, and the Cabinet were to fall, even then the programme would impose itself on any Cabinet which might take office.

Dr. Luther emphasised that he spoke of the programme as a whole, not of details. There were, indeed; many points on which minor alterations

might be necessary, and concessions on this or that point would not affect its inherent vitality. I discussed the housing part of the programme in this connexion, and Dr. Luther admitted, in response to a direct question, that here (and indeed elsewhere) there might be room for eventual concessions to the Social Democrats.

But he asked me to note that there was little disposition to attack the programme in objective detail. There were oratorical denunciations, but with little weight behind them. The interests attacked, indeed, protested, but in carefully-chosen terms and without declarations of war. The Officials' Union ('Beamtenbund'), for example, made no secret of their dislike for a 6 per cent. reduction in salaries; but they expressed themselves with a moderation from which he drew the most favourable conclusions. In every way, Dr. Luther stated emphatically, matters are moving 'to the advantage of the programme' ('zugunsten des Programms').

I then spoke of the Lee Higginson credit<sup>1</sup> to Germany, which seemed to me a marked expression of foreign confidence in Germany. Did Dr. Luther see it being answered by a similar confidence of Germans in Germany? Dr. Luther felt it was still early to say that the flight of capital had been reversed. The last two days had been remarkable for the inflow of foreign exchange, and unless they brought back their capital pretty quickly, the bolters ('Flüchtlinge') would have to put up with a sharp lesson. There was many a man in Germany who would be able to say he had kept his capital at home and made a handsome profit at the expense of the cowards. He would not be at all sorry to see the latter suffering severely, and quite expected this to happen.

I turned to the topic of the continued high level of German exports, and asked Dr. Luther whether he could give any special reason for this very encouraging feature. He could not assign any particular cause, but pointed out that the maintenance of German exports was essential to the successful carrying out of the Young plan. (He came no nearer than this to the question of reparations, and I made no attempt whatever to develop this subject.) German exports had, in fact, to be increased 'coûte que coûte,' subject only to the limitations imposed by sound business considerations. The Gold Discount Bank itself, though free of certain of the special limitations attaching to purely deposit banks, could not overstep this criterion, and its potential usefulness must be limited thereby. But even within this limitation it could assist German exports by taking on business which was unsuitable for the deposit banks.

The time at my disposal was too short to develop the last point further, or to touch upon the possibilities of new developments with regard to borrowing powers for the German municipalities. Dr. Luther had, indeed, taken up the greater part of the interview with his forceful statement regarding the financial programme. He was evidently anxious to impress me with two things: (1) The certainty of the programme being realised;

<sup>1</sup> A credit of 125,000,000 dollars negotiated in the United States by the German Government in order to meet the deficit on the German budget.

and (2) the possibility of eventual National Socialist co-operation with, if not participation in, the Cabinet in due course.

Dr. Luther's views on the former point are quite in agreement with his tendency to conceive of himself as a 'man of destiny'; the programme which he has undoubtedly had a large share in creating may not, indeed, have all the self-driving force he attributes to it, but it is undeniably becoming more difficult for possible waverers to oppose it, and it may well gather further momentum as it goes on. On the second point—the future of the National Socialist party—it is harder to form a judgment. Dr. Luther's views are entirely in harmony with what I have heard of Dr. Brüning's own estimate of the possibilities of future developments; but both may represent no more than attempts to educate foreign opinion into regarding Herr Hitler and his followers as responsible people, whose enormous energy only requires to be harnessed to creative work to be of real benefit to Germany.

### No. 331

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson. (Received November 3)*

*No. 86r [W 11510/31/98]*

Sir,

BERLIN, October 27, 1930

I have the honour to report that I was received by Dr. Curtius this morning. I had not had an opportunity of seeing him for more than three months, and my principal colleagues were in the same position. He explained to me, as I understand he explained to the French and Italian Ambassadors, who were received respectively before and after me, that his time had been fully taken up by internal and party affairs. But he was now going to move into the Foreign Minister's official residence and hoped to see the foreign representatives at much more frequent intervals.

2. Dr. Curtius began by saying that he had come away from Geneva with the pleasantest recollections of the relations which had existed there between the British and German delegations. He wished me to assure you of this and to express to you his gratitude for your attitude in the matter of the Memel question<sup>1</sup> and in the question of the reform of the secretariat of the League. On the other hand, the German delegation had been greatly disappointed at the inability of the British delegation to share the German view as to the necessity of summoning the General Disarmament Conference next year. The state in which this question of the meeting of the General Disarmament Conference had been left, namely, that it was to meet as soon as circumstances rendered it possible, was very unsatisfactory to the German Government.

3. At this point I was about to interject the observations on the subject made by Lord Cecil, as far as I remembered them, namely, that it would

<sup>1</sup> The German Government made a complaint to the Council of the League on September 20, 1930, alleging certain infringements of the Memel Convention of 1924. The complaint was withdrawn after direct agreement had been reached between Dr. Curtius and the Lithuanian representative.

be a mistake to summon a meeting of the General Disarmament Conference before being assured that satisfactory results would be obtained, when Dr. Curtius took the words out of my mouth. He pointed out that the Preparatory Disarmament Conference was to meet next month, and he really could not understand why a year from then should not be sufficient for it to complete the preliminary task of preparing the ground for the general conference, which could then meet forthwith. He did not ask that the General Disarmament Conference should meet in January, but it could surely meet in a year from now. He urged me to express to you the increasingly serious view which the German Government and public opinion take about this question. The disarmament question was, in fact, a cardinal one in the eyes of the German Government, and feeling in the country was getting so strong on the subject that, unless something were done to implement article 8 of the Covenant, there would be a risk that the whole attitude of the German Government and of the German people towards the League of Nations would be radically altered.

4. In making these remarks Dr. Curtius spoke with the greatest insistence, and added that he had reason to believe that the United States Government were likewise anxious that the General Disarmament Conference should meet next year. It was intolerable that the nations all round Germany should be increasing their armaments whilst Germany herself remained disarmed. He quoted in this connexion the recent utterances of French Ministers in and out of office, including those of M. Herriot. He added, rather as an after-thought, that it would be a great mistake for the outside world to be unduly impressed by the recent Stahlhelm rally at Coblenz. He did not consider that this was a manifestation of militarism.

5. I said that I need hardly remind Dr. Curtius that His Majesty's Government attached the utmost importance to the question of disarmament. I referred him to the speech on the subject which you had made at Newcastle only two days ago. If the General Disarmament Conference met, as he proposed, before matters were ripe and ended in failure, the reaction would be most unfortunate and the last state of the question would be worse than the first.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

## No. 332

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received November 3)*

*No. 362 [C 8115/140/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, October 27, 1930

In the course of the conversation which I had with Dr. Curtius to-day, I asked his Excellency whether he thought that the National Socialists would continue to be an important factor in German politics.

2. He replied that by their proceedings in the Reichstag and by their actions outside, such as the smashing of street windows, they had disgusted

a great many reasonably-minded Germans. But let there be no mistake, the movement, as an expression of present-day discontent in Germany and a desire for better things, had come to stay. It had stirred the nation up and could not be left out of account. Moreover, Hitler seemed to be becoming quite reasonable, as evidenced by the reply (dealt with in a subsequent despatch) which he had recently returned to M. Hervé's request for a statement on certain conditions for a Franco-German understanding.

3. These remarks led Dr. Curtius to speak about the present German Government, which, he said, had a difficult task to maintain its position. It must be able to justify its existence to the German people by the results of its activities, for instance, by obtaining certain 'alleviations' ('Erleichterungen') in the domain of foreign policy. I enquired what he meant by these alleviations, but his answer was not quite clear, as he evidently did not care to refer to questions such as the revision of the eastern frontiers of Germany. He said, however, that he had in mind the question of Memel. What would happen supposing the Lithuanian Government broke the promises which the Lithuanian Minister for Foreign Affairs had made to him at Geneva on the subject?

4. I suspect that in making these remarks to me Dr. Curtius was partly inspired by the thought of the recent attacks which have been made on him and of the intrigues of which he has been the object. These attacks have, generally speaking, been to the effect that he has been content to put up with a passive policy and that he has not been active enough in the defence of Germany's interests abroad. He has now been at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for a year, during which he has witnessed the final evacuation of the Rhineland as the result of his predecessor's efforts. Whilst I am satisfied that he will not embark on a foreign policy of adventure, there are signs that he will, if I may use the expression, 'increase the *tempo*'.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

### No. 333

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received November 3)*

*No. 864 [C 8116/4/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, October 27, 1930

Dr. Curtius spoke to me at some length to-day about the Young plan. His remarks on this subject correspond generally to the first part of the telegram from the 'Times' correspondent in Berlin of the 24th instant, published in that paper on the 25th instant.

2. The gist of this, which, for convenience of reference, I will repeat, was as follows: The German Government recognised that the acute economic depression from which Germany was suffering was not a local, but a world-wide, phenomenon. But Germany, they contended, was particularly hard hit because she was without economic reserves. The dependence of Germany's capacity to pay reparations upon the favourable development of

be a mistake to summon a meeting of the General Disarmament Conference before being assured that satisfactory results would be obtained, when Dr. Curtius took the words out of my mouth. He pointed out that the Preparatory Disarmament Conference was to meet next month, and he really could not understand why a year from then should not be sufficient for it to complete the preliminary task of preparing the ground for the general conference, which could then meet forthwith. He did not ask that the General Disarmament Conference should meet in January, but it could surely meet in a year from now. He urged me to express to you the increasingly serious view which the German Government and public opinion take about this question. The disarmament question was, in fact, a cardinal one in the eyes of the German Government, and feeling in the country was getting so strong on the subject that, unless something were done to implement article 8 of the Covenant, there would be a risk that the whole attitude of the German Government and of the German people towards the League of Nations would be radically altered.

4. In making these remarks Dr. Curtius spoke with the greatest insistence, and added that he had reason to believe that the United States Government were likewise anxious that the General Disarmament Conference should meet next year. It was intolerable that the nations all round Germany should be increasing their armaments whilst Germany herself remained disarmed. He quoted in this connexion the recent utterances of French Ministers in and out of office, including those of M. Herriot. He added, rather as an after-thought, that it would be a great mistake for the outside world to be unduly impressed by the recent Stahlhelm rally at Coblenz. He did not consider that this was a manifestation of militarism.

5. I said that I need hardly remind Dr. Curtius that His Majesty's Government attached the utmost importance to the question of disarmament. I referred him to the speech on the subject which you had made at Newcastle only two days ago. If the General Disarmament Conference met, as he proposed, before matters were ripe and ended in failure, the reaction would be most unfortunate and the last state of the question would be worse than the first.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

No. 332

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received November 3)*

*No. 862 [C 8115/1.40/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, October 27, 1930

In the course of the conversation which I had with Dr. Curtius to-day, I asked his Excellency whether he thought that the National Socialists would continue to be an important factor in German politics.

2. He replied that by their proceedings in the Reichstag and by their actions outside, such as the smashing of street windows, they had disgusted

a great many reasonably-minded Germans. But let there be no mistake, the movement, as an expression of present-day discontent in Germany and a desire for better things, had come to stay. It had stirred the nation up and could not be left out of account. Moreover, Hitler seemed to be becoming quite reasonable, as evidenced by the reply (dealt with in a subsequent despatch) which he had recently returned to M. Hervé's request for a statement on certain conditions for a Franco-German understanding.

3. These remarks led Dr. Curtius to speak about the present German Government, which, he said, had a difficult task to maintain its position. It must be able to justify its existence to the German people by the results of its activities, for instance, by obtaining certain 'alleviations' ('Erleichterungen') in the domain of foreign policy. I enquired what he meant by these alleviations, but his answer was not quite clear, as he evidently did not care to refer to questions such as the revision of the eastern frontiers of Germany. He said, however, that he had in mind the question of Memel. What would happen supposing the Lithuanian Government broke the promises which the Lithuanian Minister for Foreign Affairs had made to him at Geneva on the subject?

4. I suspect that in making these remarks to me Dr. Curtius was partly inspired by the thought of the recent attacks which have been made on him and of the intrigues of which he has been the object. These attacks have, generally speaking, been to the effect that he has been content to put up with a passive policy and that he has not been active enough in the defence of Germany's interests abroad. He has now been at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for a year, during which he has witnessed the final evacuation of the Rhineland as the result of his predecessor's efforts. Whilst I am satisfied that he will not embark on a foreign policy of adventure, there are signs that he will, if I may use the expression, 'increase the *tempo*'.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

### No. 333

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received November 3)*

*No. 864 [C 8116/4/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, October 27, 1930

Dr. Curtius spoke to me at some length to-day about the Young plan. His remarks on this subject correspond generally to the first part of the telegram from the 'Times' correspondent in Berlin of the 24th instant, published in that paper on the 25th instant.

2. The gist of this, which, for convenience of reference, I will repeat, was as follows: The German Government recognised that the acute economic depression from which Germany was suffering was not a local, but a world-wide, phenomenon. But Germany, they contended, was particularly hard hit because she was without economic reserves. The dependence of Germany's capacity to pay reparations upon the favourable development of



world trade had been acknowledged in the Young plan and provision for international assistance had been made if things went badly. Things had gone badly and the common interest had been indicated by the Chancellor when he observed that the ratio of value between gold and goods had changed to the disadvantage of all the countries with international obligations to discharge. While claiming that the economic conditions upon which the Young plan and the associated, though formally distinct, debt arrangements had been based, had undergone a radical change, and while suggesting that the common interest in the solution of Germany's reparation problem might have found more practical expression than it had, the German Government had plainly declared its conviction that Germany's immediate business was to set her own house in order.

3. Dr. Curtius said that, having been Minister of Economic Affairs before he took over the Foreign Office, and having been present at The Hague during the conferences leading up to the acceptance of the Young plan, he felt himself qualified to speak on the subject. When the bankers were engaged in drawing up the Young plan in Paris, they considered it unnecessary to introduce into it the gold clause which had figured in the Dawes plan. Subsequent events had shown the gravity of this omission. Payments under the Young plan, therefore, weighed far more heavily on the German people than was anticipated at the time. The German Government had elaborated a scheme of financial reform, which they hoped would bring the country considerable alleviation, but this reform scheme might not be sufficient for the purpose in view and he considered it his duty to examine the possibility of making use of those provisions in the Young plan which were calculated to produce a supplementary alleviation in the German economy. The German Government might either ask the Bank for International Settlements to set up a committee to examine into the economic situation of the country, or they might proclaim a moratorium.

4. I enquired whether he did not think that the demand for a moratorium might shake Germany's credit. He said that my question was a quite legitimate one, and that opinions differed as to the answer. Some people held that the two years' moratorium provided for in the Young plan would, in reality, be a benefit to the creditor nations inasmuch as the money left in Germany would be used productively and improve her economic situation.

5. I then said that I understood that, at The Hague, Germany had accepted the Young plan as a final and definitive settlement of the reparations question. He replied that the Young plan itself foresaw modifications. For instance, any modifications to which the United States Government might consent in the case of payments by ex-Allied countries to the United States were to redound to the benefit of Germany. He also seemed to remember that in a speech made by the President of the Board of Trade at, he thought, Edinburgh, Mr. Graham had said that the Young plan was only a further stage ('étape') in the reparations question. But the German Government did not want to declare a moratorium. They hoped that their financial reform scheme would produce the necessary alleviation of the

economic situation. He again insisted, however, that it was his duty to examine side by side with the financial reform scheme the question of the additional alleviation which would be brought about by making use of certain provisions of the Young plan.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

No. 334

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received November 3)*

*No. 881 [C 8128/140/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, October 31, 1930

During the recent election campaign, the programme of the National Socialist party was little more than a drum which attracted the crowd. Because of its inconsistencies and manifest absurdities, the payment of too much attention to it then was apt to be misleading. Its immature exaggerations almost insisted that there could really be no substance in the National Socialist movement.

2. Since the remarkable successes of the National Socialists in the election, the position has altered. It was the revival of the national spirit and the hope of the re-birth of Germany which largely carried them to victory. Many supporters of the movement, even many young National Socialists themselves, knew little about the programme or paid little attention to it. Now that the party has 107 seats and is the second largest in the Reichstag, the programme has come again into the limelight, and whether they like it or not, it is being forced upon the attention of the National Socialist leaders. The moment, therefore, is appropriate for an examination of the programme in detail, and I have the honour to transmit herewith a memorandum which is a summary in translation<sup>1</sup> of a commentary prepared by Herr Alfred Rosenberg, one of the official spokesmen of the party, explaining in detail each of the twenty-five points of the programme. This commentary was first produced in 1922 with the approval of Hitler and has been re-issued with an introduction dated the 20th September, 1930.

3. You will observe that the programme is declared to be unalterable because it is based on fixed principles. The leaders bind themselves to carry out its twenty-five points regardless of consequences, and, if necessary, at the cost of their own lives, and they declare that after having achieved them they will not produce new aims merely to keep the party alive by promoting artificial dissatisfaction. The final aim is a 'greater Germany,' to achieve which the programme demands the consolidation of all Germans into one great German State, equal rights for the German people with other nations, the abolition of the Treaties of Versailles and Saint-Germain, and space and colonies to feed the nation and absorb the surplus population.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

4. As regards the Jewish race, the programme is especially drastic. It declares that no Jew can be a German citizen, for a Jew is not of German blood and is not a fellow-countryman, and anybody not a German citizen can only live as a guest in Germany under laws applying to foreigners. Only citizens may occupy public offices and shall have the right to determine the leadership and legislation of the State, and all citizens must have the same rights and obligations. An article designed to destroy the Jewish control of the press provides that only Germans may be editors and correspondents of newspapers printed in the German language, and financial participation in German newspapers, or the exertion of influence upon them, by non-Germans is forbidden under penalty of banishment. Non-German newspapers will require a State licence and may not be printed in German. If the State cannot provide for its population, foreigners must be deported. All non-German immigration is to cease and all non-Germans who entered Germany since the 2nd August, 1914, are to be forced to leave the country. The object of this is to get rid of the numerous Jewish immigrants who came in from the East.

5. In the economic sphere, the programme declares that a citizen's first duty is spiritual or physical creation. Income not arising from manual or mental labour must be abolished and the servitude to interest must be broken. All war profits must be confiscated, and all hitherto syndicated industrial trusts must be nationalised. Participation in the profits of large scale enterprises is demanded. Department stores must be nationalised and rented cheaply to small traders. The old age pension system must be widely extended. A law for the expropriation without compensation of land for public purposes, the abolition of interest based on land, and the stoppage of speculation in land is demanded. Those guilty of crime against the people, usurers, profiteers, &c., are to be punished with death, regardless of religion or race.

6. Roman law, which unduly protects the individual, must be replaced by a German common law to safeguard the honour and interests of the State. Educational reform is demanded, involving the bringing of the educational system into harmony with the practical requirements of life and the inculcation of the national idea into children from infancy. The exceptionally gifted shall be educated free by the State. The State must improve the national health by providing for maternal and infant welfare, by forbidding child labour, promoting physical fitness through compulsory gymnastics and sport, and supporting athletic societies. Pornographic literature, &c., is to be suppressed. 'Mercenary troops' are to be abolished and compulsory military service reintroduced.

7. The party demands religious freedom, with safeguards for German moral feelings, adopts a positive Christianity and resists Jewish materialism in adopting the principle of 'public before private benefit.'

8. For the realisation of these plans, the party demands a strong central power represented in a political central Parliament with unlimited authority over the whole Reich.

9. Such a programme must obviously be embarrassing to the leaders of a party who are anxious to prove its fitness to participate in the Government. The programme is indeed 'Nationalist' in all its striving for a greater, better, cleaner and less corrupt Germany. That is the healthy side to this national movement with which anyone can sympathise. But it is also 'Socialist,' and in parts almost Communist, and something must be done to satisfy the Left wing, to honour the implications of the programme. Some gesture must at least be made in the direction of election promises. This explains the fantastic motions introduced at the opening of the Reichstag, the number of which was only limited by the early adjournment.

10. As Dr. Luther suggested in the conversation reported in my despatch No. 852<sup>1</sup> of the 24th October, it will suit the leaders very well if they can bring in these motions, have them rejected or laughed out by the Reichstag, and then proceed to something more really national and more constructive. But at the same time, the fact that within the party the loud pedal is on the 'Socialism' is now said to be beginning to have a disturbing effect upon outside supporters of the party, and especially upon those who have been providing it with funds. These people are beginning themselves to examine the programme more closely and to wonder. And within the party itself there are signs that the programme is beginning to pull the party in all directions.

11. The party leaders may succeed in overcoming these distempers, and it would be dangerous to assume that they will fail. Many people, however, whose wish may be father to the thought, are now claiming that there are at least indications that the party is beginning to break up. They point to the revolt of the editor of the 'Nationaler Sozialist,' Otto Strasser, who is practically a Communist, and whose brother Gregor is one of the spokesmen of the party; to the overweening ambition and growing defiance of the young Berlin leader, Dr. Goebbels, and to a joint Communist and National Socialist meeting which took place in Berlin a few days ago. Soon, they say, the party must split, the extremists going over to the Communists, the other block going over to Hugenberg, leaving a rump of only thirty to forty members.

12. To this view, Dr. Luther, as I have already reported, and a number of people who should be well informed, do not appear to subscribe. In these circumstances, it is particularly interesting that an inter-departmental conference of the competent officials of the Ministries of the Interior of the Reich and of Prussia, was held yesterday to discuss the present position of the National Socialist movement. A member of my staff was informed by an official of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs who attended the meeting, that its considered view was that there were no indications yet of a real split in the party, that Dr. Goebbels' defiance must not be taken too seriously, and that Otto Strasser was more likely to lose his paper and his editorial position, as well as being excluded from the party, than to be able to lead any successful revolt. Hitler, in fact, they were agreed, was still able,

<sup>1</sup> No. 330.

apparently whenever he wished, to exercise a remarkable influence over the whole party.

13. It is thus definitely too soon to attempt to forecast. All that is clear at the present moment is that, whether the National Socialist party succeeds in holding together in its present form, or whether it splits up, the revival of nationalism in Germany has come to stay. And as I have already indicated in previous despatches, this revival of nationalism cannot be ignored by any German Government, and it must result in the prosecution of a more forward foreign policy by Germany in the future.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

No. 335

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received November 10)*  
*No. 388 [W 11816/31/98]*

Sir,

BERLIN, November 4, 1930

With reference to my despatch No. 861<sup>1</sup> of October 27th, I have the honour to state that the question of disarmament continues to occupy a prominent place in the public interest in Germany, and the approaching meeting of the Preparatory Disarmament Commission<sup>2</sup> has provoked considerable comment in the press. The newspapers of all parties are practically unanimous in voicing Germany's dissatisfaction at the failure of other countries to carry out the obligation to reduce armaments contained in Article 8 of the League Covenant. The press generally urges that the German representative on the Preparatory Commission should continue, in the sharpest way, to press Germany's point of view; while one or two papers go further and demand that Germany should declare that the Versailles Treaty has been violated, and should give public notification that she has regained her freedom to arm.

2. The Democratic 'Börsen Courier' observes that Germany can no longer expect much from the approaching meeting in November. 'Count Bernstorff,' it continues, 'will, we have no doubt, repeat once more his serious protest and will indicate the serious consequences of a failure to carry out Article 8, and, above all, of a fake fulfilment. Even the hope expressed by the Foreign Affairs Committee to the effect that the Government of the Reich would see that it was made clear whether the foreign Powers were prepared to carry through disarmament on the principle of security based on parity cannot this time be fulfilled in Geneva, for, in the draft of a final Disarmament Convention, the figures are left open. One can only hope that the final Disarmament Conference will be called by the Council as soon as possible after the acceptance of the final report of the Preparatory Com-

<sup>1</sup> No. 331.

<sup>2</sup> The second part of the sixth (and final) session of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference opened at Geneva on November 6 and closed on December 9, 1930.

mission. This cannot be achieved before the end of this year or the beginning of next, for technical reasons, e.g. the final report must first be sent to all the Governments of the States members of the League for their detailed consideration. Then only, when all the States concerned are represented by fully empowered delegates and the attempt to work by a majority can no longer be made, will Germany make her demands before the whole world, and be able to draw the conclusion from a failure to fulfil Article 8 of the League of Nations Covenant.' The 'Börsen Courier' also published a long article by Lord Cecil entitled 'Disarmament or War'.

3. The Nationalist 'Tag' observes: 'After all that has happened in the last ten years it can be assumed that the only disarmament which will come about will be that which the stronger Powers want, and not that which the weaker want and which Europe needs. For no one is unaware that the steadily growing accumulation of both spiritual and material aggressive force on the borders of Germany represents a danger which, measured by human standards, cannot be met by revision, but only by revolutionary methods.'

4. The Conservative 'Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung' declares that Germany demands seriously and with justice, as the Foreign Affairs Committee has clearly emphasised, the disarmament of others which was assured to her by the treaty as a result of her own disarmament. 'Together with Germany', it continues, 'all the other nations in the world should demand that the game of hide and seek at Geneva may be finally put a stop to and that at least a beginning may be made towards removing as quickly as possible the inequality of armaments in Europe which constitutes a permanent threat to peace.'

5. The 'Berliner Börsen Zeitung' is more definite. We wish, it declares, that the last elections should be read as meaning: 'Thus far and no farther.' 'We desire', it adds, 'that, should France and her Allies continue to disregard their solemn promise to disarm, i.e. should a draft convention, which promises the success of the final conference, not be drawn up, Germany should declare the Versailles Treaty to have been violated in respect of one of its essential provisions, and should notify publicly that she has regained her freedom to arm.'

6. The organ of the People's Party, the 'Kölnische Zeitung' declares that since Germany's own disarmament has been established by international law, disarmament is an unconditional obligation of the victorious powers to Germany, which cannot be postponed. 'Germany', it continues, 'thinks practically (realpolitisch) enough, not to expect the removal of this condition at one stroke; she realises that disarmament comes in stages. But she knows also that, while the present state of mind of the French continues, the basis for serious and satisfactory disarmament does not exist. The alteration of this attitude of mind, which can only be brought about by a fundamental discussion, is, therefore, the more important pre-condition for disarmament.'

7. The Democratic 'Frankfurter Zeitung' defends Count Bernstorff against charges of the Opposition parties that he has not shown sufficient energy in

Geneva. 'In the Disarmament Commission', it continues, 'Count Bernstorff has always been a keen advocate of German demands, and in the Assembly the leaders of the German Delegation have not been afraid on occasions to hold strong language. Declared public opinion is, we can say, on the German side. The League of Nations has not been able, as a result of its sessions this year, to bind itself to call a conference in 1931. In the Disarmament Commission the German representatives will certainly renew their demands with the greatest emphasis.'

8. Of the provincial papers, the 'Hamburger Fremdenblatt' says that what may happen if this time nothing is done in Geneva, need not now be discussed. But it cannot be denied that the idea that Germany should then arm, cannot be carried out as long as the means of exerting force in the world remain as they are to-day.

9. With the whole press so actively beating the drum of disarmament it is curious that the Social-Democratic organ, 'Vorwärts' has, up to the present, remained silent on the subject. But it will be remembered that, as reported in paragraph 5 of my despatch No. 879<sup>1</sup> of October 31, the Social-Democrats voted against the strongly worded resolution on disarmament passed by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Reichstag on October 30.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. This despatch reported the proceedings at the Foreign Affairs Committee on October 30. The resolution on disarmament was in the following terms:

'The Foreign Affairs Committee has noted with the greatest disappointment the information given in the report of the Foreign Minister in regard to the present condition of the question of universal disarmament, especially in regard to the result of the negotiations which took place on the subject at this year's meeting of the Assembly of the League of Nations. 'The committee is bound to take note that the efforts for universal disarmament have hitherto been without practical result. 'The States which have been for years behindhand with their legal and moral obligation to disarm could not even be brought, during the recent Geneva discussions, to agree to a resolution which would have hastened the summoning of the first general Disarmament Conference. Germany is, therefore, faced with the fact that she has had to carry out, to the very last detail, the obligation to final disarmament, which has been laid upon her by the treaty, while the corresponding action by the other Powers, which was guaranteed to her by treaty, is still completely and illegally withheld. Indeed, in many countries, there has even been an increase of armaments. 'The Foreign Affairs Committee is of opinion that such a condition of things stands in brutal contradiction to the principles of equity, that a serious threat to the security of Germany and the world is thereby constituted and, in short, that no justification can be found for leaving things in their present state. The Foreign Affairs Committee expects of the Reich Government that it will do everything in its power with a view to a speedy change in this dangerous state of affairs, and that it will demand, with the utmost emphasis, a measure of disarmament on the part of the other States which will correspond in scope and manner to the disarmament of Germany, and to the principles of parity and security. The committee further demands that the Government shall ascertain whether the foreign Powers in question are willing, in accordance with this demand, to fulfil the obligations which have been laid down for them in the Treaty of Versailles.'

No. 336

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received November 10)*  
*No. 894 [C 8286/140/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, November 5, 1930

Dr. Curtius, who lunched with me to-day, enquired whether I had read the statement in which the Chancellor had introduced the financial proposals of the Government to the Reichsrat (see my despatch No. 892<sup>1</sup> of to-day's date). I replied that I had read the Chancellor's speech on that occasion. Dr. Curtius said that this speech had revealed Dr. Brüning's statesmanlike qualities and had increased his prestige both in Parliament and in the country. His remarks in this respect correspond, in fact, to those contained in the 'Hamburger Korrespondenz', to the effect that the present Chancellor is now the leading statesman of the Reich.

2. I enquired both of Dr. Curtius and of General Groener, who was likewise present at the lunch, whether they could tell me from what sources the National Socialists derived their funds. Both the Ministers replied that all persons who attended National Socialist meetings had to pay an entrance fee of 50 pf. or more. Thus at a recent National Socialist meeting held in the *Sportpalast* of Berlin, the takings were some 16,000 marks. As the expenses in connection with the hiring of the hall did not amount to more than 2,000 marks, the party had cleared something like 14,000 marks at one meeting alone. The same thing was going on all over Germany. General Groener added that the French journalist, M. Sauerwein, had recently been to Hamburg to attend one of the National Socialist meetings. The hall was full to overflowing and he had had to pay 25 marks for a seat.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

No. 337

*Mr. B. Newton (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received November 17)*  
*No. 912 [W 12167/31/98]*

Sir,

BERLIN, November 14, 1930

With reference to Sir Horace Rumbold's despatch No. 888<sup>1</sup> of the 4th November in regard to the German attitude towards the question of disarmament, I have the honour to report that the proceedings of the Preparatory Disarmament Commission at present in session at Geneva have been followed in this country with close attention and considerable impatience.

2. The general attitude of Germans towards the Commission continues to be half mistrustful, half defiant. The rejection of Count Bernstorff's amendment urging the limitation alike of the number of trained reserves

<sup>1</sup> No. 335.



and of their period of service has caused a certain amount of bitterness. German public opinion was not, however, surprised, as the whole attitude of the press towards the Preparatory Commission has been one of mistrust, and it was typical that the semi-official Wolff's Bureau, when discussing the Draft Convention on the 8th November, observed that it was obvious from the very start that the Commission had decided to accept the French point of view in regard to the main questions of land disarmament, above all in regard to trained reserves.

3. In the press, the irritation felt at the rejection of Count Bernstorff's amendment was reflected less in actual comments than in headlines such as: 'Sabotage at Geneva' (*Deutsche Tageszeitung*), 'No reduction in the million-armies' ('*Millionheere*'--*Berliner Börsen Courier*), 'Completely negative attitude of Disarmament Commission' (*Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*), 'Germany outvoted: the first victory of the enemies of disarmament' (*Vossische Zeitung*). An example of National Socialist methods was seen in the distortion by their paper, the '*Völkische Beobachter*', of the remarks of the President of the Commission, M. Loudon, to the effect that complete disarmament was still unobtainable, into the words, given as a front page headline: 'We must get accustomed not to talk any more about disarmament'.

4. Particular publicity was given to the statement made by Count Bernstorff after the rejection of his amendment. He is reported to have said that the object of his motion had been to clear the way for the general disarmament conference, that Germany could put her hand to no agreement which left out of account the questions of trained reserves, of the period of service and of the stores of munitions in various countries, and that no instrument which failed to deal with the question of the system of universal conscription in other countries would be worth the ink in which it was written.

5. The press comments on the proceedings at Geneva differ more in emphasis than in substance. As might be expected, the Nationalist papers are more defiant than disappointed, while in the case of the Democratic and Left journals the element of disappointment is on the whole more in evidence. One Nationalist newspaper says that if national security is to become the main object of the world policy, then Germany's need is the greatest. There are only two alternatives according to this journal, i.e. disarmament by others 'in accordance with their written word and promise', or the rearmament of Germany.

6. The Democratic papers, as already indicated, are less belligerent but firm. '*Germania*', the organ of the Catholic Centre, the paper which most closely reflects the Chancellor's views, contains, perhaps, the most interesting comment. 'The military safety of Germany', it says, 'has disappeared. France and her satellite states can place 10 million men in the field, whilst Germany has only her 100,000 Reichswehr men—a hundredfold superiority. In such circumstances it is grotesque to talk of a menace to the safety of France (or even Poland). . . . The German Republic cannot be subjected to special conditions. In the League of Nations there can only exist states possessing equal status.'

7. Underneath all the talking and complaining, the whole tendency at the moment is for the demand for the right to re-arm to become more definite and more outspoken. It was explained to me in a private after-dinner conversation with a member of the Foreign Office that if the eventual right to re-arm is being increasingly asserted, it is only in order to increase the pressure of the demand for general disarmament, which is what the majority of Germans really want. I have no doubt that this explanation was sincerely meant, but fear that in a matter of this kind the views of an aggressive minority are more likely to prevail over those of a docile and peace-loving majority.

I have, &c.

B. C. NEWTON

No. 338

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin)*

*No. 1159 [C 8849/4/18]*

Sir,

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 2, 1930*

In your Excellency's despatch No. 864<sup>1</sup> of the 27th October you reported to me a conversation you had had that day with the Minister for Foreign Affairs in which he had spoken at some length on the Young plan. As it would seem imprudent to allow Dr. Curtius's statements in regard to the possibility of the declaration of a moratorium by the German Government to pass without comment, I propose in the present despatch to set forth the considered views of His Majesty's Government on this matter, and to request you to make these views known to the German Government.

2. In the first place, I wish to state most definitely that, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, the existing financial and economic position of Germany does not in any way justify the German Government in suggesting that it may be necessary to declare a moratorium or to cause the Special Advisory Committee to be convened under paragraph 119 of the Young plan, if the programme of financial reform does not alleviate the situation. On the contrary, His Majesty's Government hold that such action is to be most strongly deprecated in view of the grave economic and political results which must ensue.

3. In support of the suggestion the German Government would no doubt argue that a radical change in the economic position of Germany has occurred since the date of the Young plan. There has been a catastrophic fall in world prices, which has had the effect of increasing the real burden of all gold obligations, including the reparation liabilities of Germany, and which has accordingly diminished the value of the concessions embodied in the Young plan. Meanwhile, there has been a trade depression of exceptional severity as a result of which the number of the unemployed exceeds 3½

<sup>1</sup> No. 333.

millions, and is likely to increase during the winter months. Further, the exchange position, it will no doubt be argued, has been adversely affected by the withdrawal of foreign balances and the diminution of commercial foreign credits, leading to the export of gold by the Reichsbank to the value of £21,500,000, in addition to a serious loss of foreign exchange.

4. But, though these pleas may be advanced by the German Government, it is the considered opinion of His Majesty's Government that they do not constitute any justification either for a suspension of transfers or for any revision of the Young plan. Germany definitely accepted the fixation of her reparation liabilities in gold, as part of a bargain by which her total liabilities were scaled down and the two variable factors in the Dawes plan, viz., the index of prosperity and the gold revision clause, were alike abandoned. It is accordingly not open to her now to claim a revision on the ground that the burden of gold liabilities has been increased by reason of the general fall of prices. As regards the trade depression (which must be regarded as a temporary phenomenon in considering Germany's obligations for the next half-century), it may be said that Germany has been less severely affected than many other countries, since the prices of the raw materials which she imports have declined far more than the prices of the manufactured goods which she exports. Moreover, Germany has been able to maintain the level of her exports better than this country, the exports of Germany having fallen only some 9 per cent. in value during the nine months to the 30th September, 1930, as compared with the nine months to the 30th September, 1929, whereas the corresponding reduction of British exports has been nearly 20 per cent. It is true that the withdrawal of balances, both on the part of German nationals and of foreigners, has led to a considerable loss of gold and foreign exchange, but the Reichsbank has had no difficulty in maintaining the exchange, and on the 23rd November, 1930, its published gold reserve amounted to 55·1 per cent. of the notes in circulation, as against the legal minimum of 30 per cent., and the gold and foreign currency reserve to 68 per cent. as against the legal minimum of 40 per cent. The trade balance of Germany, which showed a deficit during the operation of the Dawes plan (except for one short period), has produced a surplus of £60 million, including reparation deliveries, or £35 million, excluding such deliveries, during the period from the signature of The Hague Agreement to the 30th September, 1930.

5. Thus the economic difficulties from which Germany in common with the rest of the world is suffering are not such as to necessitate any postponement of transfer or reopening of The Hague settlement. Her budget difficulties would be unaffected by a moratorium, since even the postponable annuities would continue for at least a year to be paid in reichsmarks in full, and in any case the cure for those difficulties is, as the present German Government have had the wisdom to recognise, a reduction of expenditure and a reform of the relations between the Reich and the constituent States. On the other hand, such exchange difficulties as have recently occurred are due, not to the reparation burden, but to the alarm caused both in Germany and abroad by the reckless pronouncements of Hitler and other extremists

in Germany. In so far, therefore, as there are any difficulties, the responsibility for them rests, in different degrees, with Germany, and they cannot be invoked as a ground for revising the annuities which Germany accepted as a complete and final settlement of reparations less than a year ago. It is much more likely that the result of an investigation of the position would be to provoke demands for the reimposition of the foreign controls without any reduction of the annuities.

6. In these circumstances there seems to be little prospect of anything but a deadlock arising if the Special Advisory Committee is convened. It appears from the remarks made by Dr. Curtius to your Excellency on the 27th October that the German Government assume that the committee would be entitled to recommend a general revision of the plan. But the actual terms of reference of the committee are to report 'What, in their opinion, are the measures that should be taken *in regard to the application of the plan*' (paragraph 121 of the Young plan).

7. The view of the German Government is therefore likely to be contested and the committee might well find itself held up, at the outset, by the question of competence. If this difficulty were overcome, it is highly improbable that the members of the committee would be unanimous either in their diagnosis of the present situation or in their recommendations as to the future. Further, when the committee had reported, it may be assumed that none of the creditor Governments will be willing to accept any reduction in the reparation payments due to them, so long as there is no equivalent reduction in their war debt payments to the United States of America; and, for the present, at any rate, there appears to be no prospect of any alteration in the American attitude to this question.

8. While, therefore, the declaration of a moratorium or a request for the convening of the Special Advisory Committee seems most unlikely to result in any alleviation of the burdens on Germany, the dangers to Germany of any such action are exceedingly grave. Such dangers are both financial and political. Financially the immediate effect of such action would, in all probability, be to destroy all confidence on the part of foreign lenders. It must be remembered that the threats of the Hitlerites have seriously shaken the credit of Germany which has been so painfully and laboriously restored during the past five years and would have completely destroyed it had not the apprehensions aroused by these pronouncements been mitigated by the firm policy which the German Government have hitherto pursued. If it were to appear that the German Government had departed from that attitude and had surrendered to a policy dictated by the extremists, there would almost certainly be a precipitate withdrawal of foreign balances and a cessation of further credits from abroad, while the tendency in Germany towards a flight from the mark would inevitably be accentuated. The ultimate result is impossible to foretell, but it might well involve a complete collapse of the German economic system.

9. On the political side, the effect would be equally disastrous. The German Government, by appealing to the safeguards in the Young plan, would

undoubtedly excite hopes in Germany of a revision of the plan and their position would become exceedingly difficult if those hopes were to prove incapable of realisation. They would then be faced with the alternatives of reverting to the existing plan, the fulfilment of which would have been made more difficult by their initiative, or of seeing power pass into the hands of other, and less responsible, elements. But the effect of such developments would not be confined to Germany and unfortunate reactions would be provoked in other countries. The net result would be to inflame nationalist and chauvinist feelings throughout Europe with ultimate consequences on the political and economic situation which would involve direct and indirect losses both to Germany and to other countries far greater than any advantages which the German Government could hope to obtain from the action which they had set on foot.

10. It appears to His Majesty's Government that in the present condition of world-wide financial tension, any fresh shock to credit involves the most serious risks and, whatever the internal political situation in Germany may be, any German Government which precipitated a reparation crisis would be assuming a very heavy responsibility. His Majesty's Government consider that any German Government which claims to pursue a statesmanlike course, must be prepared to carry on unflinchingly the policy of fulfilment by means of which Germany was saved from imminent social and economic collapse in 1924, and which has succeeded in restoring in so large a degree her former financial and commercial prosperity. In pursuance of that policy, the German Government should firmly insist on the integral execution of all their obligations under the new plan, without any question of moratorium or revision, unless and until the financial situation becomes so obviously strained, through no fault on the part either of the Government or of any group in Germany, that recourse to the measures of safeguard provided in the plan will relieve rather than accentuate the difficulties. This condition is far from being fulfilled at present. The financial reforms recently proposed must not merely be voted, but their effect on the budgetary situation must be watched and their scope and adequacy must then, if necessary, be reconsidered. So long as it is in any way open to question whether the German Government should or should not avail itself of the safeguards provided in the plan, it may be said that no case has arisen for using those safeguards.

11. To sum up, the point of view which I wish your Excellency to put forward in discussing the question with Dr. Curtius is that the convening of the Special Advisory Committee (whether coupled with a moratorium or not) was intended to be resorted to only in case of manifest necessity, and that in the opinion of His Majesty's Government no such necessity can be said at present to exist; that, consequently, any such action appears to His Majesty's Government likely to provoke the gravest dangers, without being likely to give Germany the slightest relief; and that if the German Government should decide to adopt such a course, they must expect no support or help from this country in the inevitable difficulties which they will bring upon themselves.

12. Your Excellency will no doubt agree that it is undesirable that His Majesty's Government should make any formal or written representations to the German Government on the subject, and I should be glad, therefore, if you would take an early opportunity of visiting Dr. Curtius and informing him that you have been turning over in your mind all that he had said to you on the 27th October regarding the Young plan and that you have also consulted your Government on the subject. You are now, therefore, in a position to inform him verbally and unofficially of the views held by His Majesty's Government. You should then convey to him, with the utmost emphasis and gravity, the views of His Majesty's Government on the lines indicated in the preceding paragraph. Should, as is probable, a discussion ensue, your Excellency is authorised to show Dr. Curtius the text of the present despatch so that he may realise the technical arguments on which His Majesty's Government base their conclusions. A copy of the despatch, however, should not be left with Dr. Curtius.

13. I am forwarding copies of this despatch to His Majesty's representatives at Paris, Rome and Brussels in order that they may be in possession of the views of His Majesty's Government in the event of their being questioned by the Governments to which they are accredited on the subject of a possible moratorium in Germany. Should those Governments further enquire what action His Majesty's Government propose to take in regard to this possibility, His Majesty's representatives will then be in a position to reply that His Majesty's Government have already made known their views verbally to Dr. Curtius.

I am, &c.

ARTHUR HENDERSON

No. 339

*Mr. A. Henderson to Lord Tyrrell (Paris)*

*No. 2565 [C 8849/4/18]*

My Lord,

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 8, 1930*

I transmit to Your Lordship herewith a copy of Sir Horace Rumbold's despatch No. 864 of October 27th reporting that in the matter of reparation payments the German Government were considering the expediency of causing the Special Advisory Committee to be convened under paragraph 119 of the Young Plan or of declaring a moratorium. I also enclose a copy of my reply to Sir H. Rumbold, setting forth the considered views of His Majesty's Government on these contingencies and requesting His Excellency to make these views known to the German Government verbally and unofficially, but in words which could leave them in no doubt of the grave misgivings with which their present attitude is regarded.

2. While my instructions to Berlin were in preparation the French Ambassador informed Sir Robert Vansittart that Dr. Curtius had spoken to the French and, rather more explicitly, to the Belgian Ambassador in Berlin on

the subject of reparations and enquired if any conversation on the subject had taken place between Dr. Curtius and Sir Horace Rumbold. Sir Robert Vansittart replied in the affirmative adding, however, that the words used by Dr. Curtius were less explicit than his speech published in 'The Times' on November 21st. Sir R. Vansittart also acquainted M. de Fleuriau with the tenour of the instructions being issued to His Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin; as, however, I was particularly anxious to avoid the fact and the character of my communication to the German Government being published or exaggerated, he took care to emphasise its informal nature and to refrain from textual quotation. Similar enquiries have been made by, and a similar answer returned to, the Belgian Ambassador.

3. This despatch and its enclosures will indicate the lines on which you should reply to any enquiry that the French Government may address to you on the same subject. You should also be guided by knowledge of the fact that the form of my instructions to Sir H. Rumbold is designed to forestall a proposal that anything like formal or joint representations should be made to the German Government by the creditor Powers at the present juncture.

4. Similar despatches have been sent to His Majesty's Representatives at Rome and Brussels.

I am, &c.

ARTHUR HENDERSON

#### No. 340

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received December 15)*

*No. 988 [C 9149/4/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, December 10, 1930

On my return from leave of absence on the 7th instant I found your despatch No. 1159<sup>1</sup> of the 2nd instant, instructing me to make known to the German Government the views of His Majesty's Government regarding Dr. Curtius's statement as to the possibility of the declaration of a moratorium in connexion with the Young plan, as reported by me in my despatch No. 864 of the 27th October last. I accordingly arranged an interview with Dr. Curtius, which took place this afternoon.

2. After giving Dr. Curtius some personal impressions of my recent visits to Rome and to Paris, I referred to the conversation which I had had with him on the 27th October, in which he had made certain statements to me in connexion with the Young plan. I informed his Excellency that I had thought over this conversation and that I had been in communication with my Government on the subject. I was now, therefore, in a position to inform him verbally and unofficially of the views held by His Majesty's Government. I went on to summarise the contents of your despatch under reply, and read to him textually paragraph 11 of that despatch.

<sup>1</sup> No. 338.

3. Dr. Curtius then began to recapitulate the arguments he had used in his conversation with me on the 27th October, and so I thought it as well at this point to let him know that I had not failed to report to you fully what he had said to me. In order to prove that I had omitted none of his arguments, I read to him textually the report which I had made to you of our conversation. He recognised that my report was absolutely correct, and as your despatch under reply deals with all the points which he raised at the time, it became necessary for me to show him your despatch, a copy of which I had prepared, with the omission of the last two paragraphs. I should mention at this point that I ventured to make a small alteration in the third line of paragraph 2 of your despatch by substituting the word '*would* not in any way justify,' &c., for 'does.' I do not think that this weakens the force of your despatch.

4. Dr. Curtius began by reading the despatch, but very quickly confessed that he did not know English sufficiently well to appreciate the exact value of the wording and the technical expressions used in it. Although our interviews are always conducted in German, I did not feel, on my side, that I was competent to give him in German a faithful version of the despatch, and I therefore suggested that he should call a member of his department who had a complete knowledge of English. He accordingly sent for Herr von Bülow, the Secretary of State, who knows English perfectly, and I feel that the presence of the Secretary of State with the Minister gave my communication the emphasis and gravity with which you wished me to convey the views of His Majesty's Government.

5. I then read the despatch to his Excellency and to his Secretary of State, who occasionally interrupted to ask for explanations. I am satisfied that they fully understood the communication which I had made to them, and Dr. Curtius thanked me at the end for communicating to him the views of His Majesty's Government on the subject in question. He said that he could not, of course, make any observations off-hand on the communication which I had made to him, which would take time to digest. He might ask me to come and see him again in order to speak to me about it.

6. The atmosphere was perfectly friendly throughout the interview, and I venture to think that the action of the Reichstag (as it turned out immediately before the interview) in declining to accept the motion of want of confidence in Dr. Curtius contributed towards this. But I must add, in justice to Dr. Curtius, that it is an advantage to have to deal with a man of a calm and balanced temperament.

7. In paragraph 9 of your despatch under reply you say that 'the German Government, by appealing to the safeguards in the Young plan, would undoubtedly excite hopes in Germany of a revision of the plan and their position would become exceedingly difficult if those hopes were to prove incapable of realisation.' The German Government have, in fact, already excited these hopes, for you will remember that in his despatch No. 933<sup>1</sup> of the 21st ultimo Mr. Newton reported the announcement about foreign policy

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.



made by Dr. Curtius to the Reichsrat on the 20th November, in the course of which his Excellency said: 'We expect it to be understood abroad that the Government of the Reich, after bringing into effect its industrial and financial plan, must consider the question whether it must not also make use of the protective measures provided for in the treaties.' He also, as the Chancellor had done before him, referred to the close relationship between the Government's financial programme and a strong German foreign policy. This expression can only mean a policy aiming at a revision of the treaties and of the Young plan.

8. The financial sacrifices in the shape of reduction of salaries and wages and increased taxation which the German Government are calling on the nation to make are interpreted by a large section of the nation as designed to enable the German Government to fulfil their obligations to the creditor nations under the Young plan. It is not surprising, therefore, from the point of view of the German Government, that they should wish to sweeten the pill by holding out hopes of alleviations in future payments to the creditor nations. In his speech to the Reichsrat on the 20th ultimo (see Mr. Newton's despatch No. 932<sup>1</sup> of the 21st ultimo), the Chancellor used the following expression: 'The Government has no idea of allowing the aims and phases of its foreign policy to be dictated by day-to-day considerations of internal policy, or by tactical considerations arising from agitations in the internal political field.' I venture to think, however, that, as has hitherto been the case, internal and external policy will continue to react on each other, and that, in consequence, the difficulties of the Brüning Government will increase rather than diminish, at least during the coming winter, and possibly until a general economic revival brings relief. It is difficult to think of anybody in the Germany of to-day more capable of directing the affairs of the Reich than the present Chancellor, and it would be a misfortune for the country if he had to go.

I am, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

#### No. 341

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received December 15)*

*No. 998 [C 9154/52/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, December 12, 1930

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a memorandum entitled 'The Total Foreign Debt of Germany' which has been drawn up by the financial adviser to this Embassy.<sup>1</sup> The essential interest of the memorandum, which sums up the results of a study by the Statistical Office of the Reich of the total amount of money owed by Germany to foreign countries, is the extent to which it reveals the weakness of Germany's financial position

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

on the banking side. It is this weakness of which the Government has several times complained, on the ground that it hampered their representatives during the reparation conferences in Paris and at The Hague, so that they did not dare refuse concessions demanded from them for fear of the financial consequences. On the other hand, this weakness proved a weapon with which Dr. Luther could force the inclusion of Mr. Parker Gilbert's reforms in the Government programme in order that a foreign credit might be possible. The political parties then had to swallow the programme in order to obtain the foreign credit of £25 million through Messrs. Lee, Higginson.

2. The attached memorandum gives some idea of what these financial consequences might be. According to the Statistical Office, Germany's total debt to foreign countries, exclusive of reparations, is something over 26 milliard reichsmarks (£1,300 million). Against this Germany has money owing to her from foreign countries to a total of some 10 milliard reichsmarks (£500 million). Part of these claims and counter-claims are fixed at long term, *i.e.*, repayment cannot be demanded at short notice in the event of a political or other crisis. But very large sums indeed can be demanded from Germany either immediately or within the space of two or three months. It appears that the total sums so callable are of the order of magnitude of £500 million. Germany has assets in foreign countries quickly available and sufficient to meet something between a quarter and a half of this sum. But in the event of a real run upon Germany, it is difficult to see how she could meet her obligations in full. If she did not, there would be a serious risk of a breakdown in the whole German economic system.

3. At the conclusion of the memorandum Mr. Rowe-Dutton has attempted to estimate the advantage which has accrued to Germany as a debtor country by the lowering of international interest rates during the last year. This advantage is certainly considerable, and sets off to some extent the increased burden of reparations due to the general fall in prices.

4. Germany's short-term foreign debt has been a very important factor in deciding her policy during the last two years. The money borrowed on short term, *i.e.*, two to three years, has been passed on to industry partly at long term, while part has become 'frozen' stock, the value of which is not quickly realisable, particularly in a depressed market.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

No. 342

*Letter from Sir R. Vansittart to Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin)*

[A 7815/1/45]

FOREIGN OFFICE, December 20, 1930

You will probably be aware that when in last April it became clear that there was no immediate hope of arriving at an agreement which would embrace all five participating Powers, it was agreed to adjourn the Naval

Conference on the understanding that France and Italy would lose no time in opening conversations, looking to the early settlement of their naval differences and their accession to the London Naval Treaty. I won't weary you with a meticulous explanation of all that has passed since then. It will suffice to say that although conversations between French and Italian experts took place in Paris last August and in September at Geneva during the meeting of the Council, and have again been in progress with the assistance of Craigie since the early days of November, no real progress seems to have been made, and we appear at present still to be confronted with something of a deadlock. Throughout these conversations the great bone of contention between the French and the Italians has been the insistence of the latter on naval parity with the former, the French feeling with some truth that their absolute needs are greater than those of the Italians. We have always realised, too, that in these conversations the French have not been concerned solely with the relative strength of their fleet as against that of Italy, but also with other factors, such as the German 'pocket' battleships, in regard to which there was unfortunately a *furor* just about the time that the Naval Conference was about to meet. In the course of their informal discussions with Craigie, the French have now come into the open on this particular point and, in this connexion, I should quote the following pertinent extract from one of Craigie's reports:<sup>1</sup>

'The conversation has turned on the amount of overage ships which France would be prepared to have in her fleet after 1936. Admiral Darlan stated, with the utmost emphasis, that it was the set intention of the French Government to have as soon as possible a properly balanced fleet of 642,000 tons comprised of underage vessels only. This was the minimum which could be considered adequate for France's security in view of the steadily growing importance of the German fleet. When I interjected that it was by no means certain that Germany would build her "pocket" battleships, he replied that the preparations they had already made for this purpose and the construction of new destroyers, etc., designed to operate with these ships left little doubt in the mind of the French Government that the new type ships would in fact be constructed. However, it was not merely the construction of these capital ships, but the general renewal of the whole German fleet which aroused misgivings as to German intentions. Great Britain, with her fleet of well over a million tons, could afford to look down at the German fleet from the height of her "Mont Blanc" with relative indifference, but to France, looking down from her "Salève", the steadily increasing strength of the German fleet could not thus be ignored. Moreover, France always had Italy "dans le dos".'

This seems to suggest that Germany has come right into the naval disarmament picture and, in these circumstances, it is essential that we should be clear in our minds about the facts of the German naval programme and, so far as we can, about the trend of German policy in these matters. We understand the facts to be that one 'pocket' battleship of the *Ersatz Preussen*

<sup>1</sup> This extract is taken from a letter of November 29 from Mr. Craigie to Sir R. Vansittart.

class is under construction and it is proposed that three others should be laid down in 1931, 1932, and 1934. The expenditure for these three ships has not yet been sanctioned and consequently no funds have been appropriated for their construction. There are also four new German cruisers of the *Emden* class (six thousand tons with 6-inch guns) built and building, while the *Leipzig* scheduled for completion next year will be the fifth and last of these new cruisers. And, of course, auxiliary vessels such as destroyers, etc. Is this correct?

Secondly, what is the prospect of the scheme outlined above *really* materialising? Is the scheme likely to be contracted or expanded as time goes on? Is there any likelihood of the building scheme being restricted or retarded by considerations of finance? Or socialist opposition? Or on the other hand are the German Government likely to push on with the scheme for purely political reasons, because they see in it a bargaining weapon and a means of making their weight felt in Europe generally? I wrote recently to Tyrrell suggesting that if the French were about to build capital ships (they talk about three new ships of twenty-three thousand tons each) to counter the German programme, it would be a mistake for them to be too precipitate. Do you agree with this view?

ROBERT VANSITTART

No. 343

*Letter from Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Sir R. Vansittart*  
[C 116/116/18]

BERLIN, January 2, 1931

On receiving your very interesting letter of 20th December<sup>1</sup> I asked the Naval Attaché for his observations on the technical points which you have mentioned. I enclose a memorandum which he has drawn up for me and which answers most of your questions. You will see from it that you have correctly stated in the penultimate page of your letter the present situation of the German naval programme.

The position is that the *Ersatz Preussen* is still under construction, but, I understand, will be launched some time this year. The first instalment asked for in respect of Battleship 'B' was rejected by the Reichstag some little time ago. It is fair to assume that the German Government drew up their ship-building programme in order to avoid a struggle over each battleship separately. The Naval Attaché has clearly brought out in paragraphs 9 and 10 of his memorandum the point that the new battleships are a necessity to enable full use to be made of the 6,000 ton cruisers. Incidentally, with the completion of the *Leipzig* this year the German cruiser programme will have been completed and no further new cruisers are contemplated.

I am of the opinion that the Germans will go through with their naval programme if possible. No doubt it will be opposed by the Social Democrats

<sup>1</sup> No. 342.

and the Communists, and I have seen it stated in a Kiel paper that when the Budget Committee of the Reichstag meets on January 13th, the Social Democrats will propose cuts of from 5-10 per cent. in the Naval estimates. It is unlikely that the Naval and Military estimates will come up for consideration until January 17th or 18th, and we shall of course immediately report the decisions taken by the Committee.

In the above connexion I would like to refer you to paragraph 7 of Newton's despatch No. 952<sup>1</sup> of 28th November last. That paragraph said: 'It may, therefore, be hoped that the Social Democrats will either be able to swallow the Government programme as a whole, or that if some part of it, such as the naval programme, proves absolutely irreconcilable with their convictions, their votes on such an issue would be replaced by others, e.g. from the National Socialist party, which would ordinarily be cast against the Government. The very fact that the National Socialists may well believe time to be on their side may make them the more ready to stay their hand and lend themselves to such manoeuvres.'

There is barely enough money to go round and the Social Democrats are concerned to maintain the expenditure on social services at least at the present level, though they would no doubt like to increase that expenditure. But Brüning could, with the help of his own party and that of the parties standing to the right of the Centre, get a majority in committee for the naval programme as it stands. I do not believe that the German naval programme is likely to be contracted as time goes on. You will note that the Treaty allows Germany to maintain six battleships in commission, whereas the programme contemplates the construction of only four pocket battleships, the main reason being, of course, that the Germans being limited to a total personnel of 15,000, out of which the coast artillery and other shore services have to be supplied, cannot maintain more vessels in commission. Nor do I think that the German Government are likely to push on with the scheme for purely political reasons. They have always at the back of their mind the necessity of keeping open their connexions with East Prussia in case of complications with Poland.

I understand that each pocket battleship would take about four years to build, so that the Germans would be able to embody the latest improvements. Finally, there has been so much talk recently in this country of the failure of the Preparatory Disarmament Conference and of the German claim to a right to re-arm, that it seems to me unlikely that the German Government would waive the right to the construction of ships authorised by the Treaty of Versailles.

HORACE RUMBOLD

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

#### ENCLOSURE IN No. 343

The German Shipbuilding Programme has been published as an annex to the Estimates for 1931.

According to this programme, one ship of the *Ersatz Preussen* type is to be laid down in each of the years 1931, 1932 and 1934, thus making, with the ship already under construction, a total of four of this type.

No further new cruisers are contemplated in the building programme. With the completion of *Leipzig* next year, Germany will possess five 6,000-ton cruisers.

At present Germany only maintains in commission 4 battleships and 5 cruisers (as against 6 of each type allowed by the Treaty of Versailles). This is largely due to manning difficulties with a total personnel fixed at 15,000 out of which the Coast Artillery and other shore services have to be supplied.

Expenditure for the proposed three new ships of *Ersatz Preussen* type has not yet been sanctioned, as the estimates have not yet been before the Reichstag. They will come before the Budget Committee in the middle of January.

At present it is difficult to foresee the outcome of the debates on the estimates. Much opposition will doubtless have to be faced, and judging from comments in the press the Social-Democrats will press for at least a modification of the building programme and will resist the inclusion in the 1931 estimates of a first instalment towards the second armoured ship. It may therefore be taken that the programme will either be reduced or remain as it is until after 1936. An extension before that date is most unlikely.

The present programme may be said to form a minimum of German naval requirements. If Germany is to maintain an effective navy she must replace her obsolete battleships. By the Treaty of Versailles, the life of German battleships is fixed at a minimum of 20 years. All the present battleships are older than this and therefore due for replacement.

It has been pointed out on several occasions that the cost of maintenance of these old ships is far in excess of that which would be required for vessels of more recent construction.

Furthermore the speed of the old ships is low (18 knots designed) and much publicity was given at the termination of this year's autumn manoeuvres to the fact that this low speed greatly hampered the movements of the new cruisers, which, attacked by heavier craft (by which of course the French 10,000-ton cruisers are understood), are bound to fall back for support on the slow battleships and thus sacrifice any advantage which might accrue from their speed. It was emphasised that a squadron of fast armoured and heavily gunned ships was a necessity to enable full use to be made of the 6,000-ton cruisers.

It would seem that these vessels are a vital necessity for the German Fleet to enable it to fulfil its task of assuring communication between Germany and East Prussia in the face of any opposition which might be encountered. It does not therefore seem at all likely that the proposed construction of such a squadron is intended merely as a bargaining weapon.

It is to be noted that the programme contemplates the construction of only four vessels of this type, whereas the treaty allows six to be maintained in commission.

the forthcoming meeting of the Council, and the satisfaction which the German delegate may or may not succeed in obtaining at Geneva in regard to the treatment of minorities is bound to have a reaction, favourable or otherwise, on the Brüning Cabinet. But in present circumstances it is difficult to see what other Government could replace the Brüning Government.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

No. 345

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received January 12)*

*No. 17 [W 374/47/98]*

Sir,

BERLIN, *January 6, 1931*

I asked Herr von Bülow to-day what action, if any, the German Government proposed to take at Geneva in connexion with the summoning of the General Disarmament Conference. He replied that the German delegation would ask that it should be summoned to meet at the earliest possible date. They thought that it should meet early in November. The Conference would no doubt be lengthy and could adjourn in the normal way over Christmas and the New Year without arousing undesirable speculation. If, however, it met early in 1932 and had to adjourn for any reason, such an adjournment would give rise to a great deal of undesirable and embarrassing speculation.

2. The Secretary of State then asked me whether I had any information as to who would be proposed for the post of chairman of the General Disarmament Conference. On my replying in the negative he said that there had been reports in the press that Dr. Benes would be proposed for the post in question. There would be definite opposition to this proposal from the German point of view. The Germans had no objection to Dr. Benes on personal grounds, nor did they doubt his capacity as a chairman. But they considered that the General Disarmament Conference should be presided over by a neutral.<sup>1</sup>

3. I told Herr von Bülow that I had read some adverse criticisms in a local German paper of the suggestion that Dr. Benes should be proposed as chairman of the General Disarmament Conference, and I had also read what appeared to be a semi-official communiqué on the subject which had appeared in the 'Berliner Tageblatt' of yesterday evening. Herr von Bülow said that this communiqué had been the outcome of a conversation between Herr Zechlin, head of the German press bureau, and Herr Jordan of the 'Berliner Tageblatt' who had wished to write a violent article opposing the suggestion that Dr. Benes should be proposed as chairman of the General Disarmament Conference.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

<sup>1</sup> A personal reference (not to Dr. Benes) by Herr von Bülow is here omitted.

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received January 19)*  
*No. 47 [C 402/11/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, *January 16, 1931*

I have had an opportunity during the last few days of exchanging views with some of my colleagues on the present economic and political situation in Germany. The colleagues with whom I have talked are men who have been here some considerable time and on whose judgment I can rely. All of them take a serious view of the situation and look forward with anxiety to the course of the winter. The Netherlands Minister went so far as to express the opinion that the present state of affairs was more serious than at any time since the war, not excluding the inflation period. Whilst I am not in a position to compare the situation during the inflation period with that which prevails at the present moment, there is no doubt whatever about the gravity of the economic situation, which is complicated by the uncertainty of the political situation. Much will depend on whether the rest of the winter is severe or not. Up to the present it has fortunately been mild.

2. At a time when there is great and general distress and a real shortage of money and credit, the Government are trying to bring down prices *pari passu* with the reduction of salaries and wages. It has so far proved less difficult to reduce salaries than to bring down prices. Yet, unless the latter come down simultaneously with the reduction in salaries and wages, there must be a further restriction of purchasing power, with a consequent accentuation of the economic crisis.

3. The economic situation naturally has a direct bearing on the political situation, and bad economic conditions play straight into the hands of the extreme elements of the State, whether they are National Socialists or Communists. Herr Solf, who has recently been giving a series of lectures on Japan in different parts of Germany, returned to Berlin greatly impressed by the number of 'Nazis' whom he had met everywhere. He affirmed that, in some cases, 80 per cent. of his audience were Nazis. Can the German Government at the present moment honestly hold out any prospect of alleviation in the economic field, or of success in matters of external policy of vital interest to Germany? The reply would seem to be in the negative. There is no question of a fresh appeal to the electorate, for elections held in present circumstances would certainly result in an accession of strength to the Nazi party. One is, therefore, driven to speculate as to the immediate future of the National Socialist movement. A party of negation, which advocates the tearing up of treaties and the repudiation of international obligations, cannot exist for an indefinite period. It must show results, and, in a time of distress, it must show, or at least promise, those results quickly. But, so far, there has been no indication as to how the National Socialist leaders propose to execute their programme. The question, then, is, at what moment the period of disillusionment will begin and what the disillusioned will do.



4. It has been suggested that considerable numbers of the disappointed Hitlerites or 'Nazis' will join the Communists, and this is by no means improbable, since their programme touches the Communist programme at several points. I have found general agreement amongst my colleagues that a 'Putsch' has no chance of success so long as President Hindenburg is at the head of affairs and Dr. Brüning and Dr. Braun are in power. The Reichswehr can be counted on to support the Government. There remains, therefore, the possibility that the National Socialists, who are an irresponsible party and cannot be entrusted with the Government, may, possibly with the help of the 'Stahlhelm,' provoke disorders and engage on an increasing scale in clashes with the Communist and Reichsbanner organisations.

5. The reassembly of the Reichstag on the 3rd February next should give some indication of the line of action which the National Socialist leaders are likely to follow, and the course of affairs during the League Council meeting will not be without its reaction on the parliamentary and political situation. I have, therefore, merely attempted, in the present despatch, briefly to summarise the opinions and speculations which I have recently heard expressed regarding the present state of affairs and future developments. Meanwhile, the Minister of Finance, speaking in the Budget Committee yesterday, said that it would be a mistake to be too pessimistic regarding the outlook, as pessimism can only increase the psychological factors contributing to hinder business enterprise.

I am, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

No. 347

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir R. Vansittart (Received January 19)*

*No. 1 [W 668/47/98]*

The British delegate to the League of Nations presents his compliments, and has the honour to transmit copies of a record of a conversation to-day with Dr. Curtius.

GENEVA, *January 17, 1931*

ENCLOSURE IN No. 347

*Record of Conversation between Mr. Henderson and Dr. Curtius on January 17*

Dr. Curtius came to see me this morning to discuss various questions which are coming up at the present session of the Council.

In the first place, he thanked me for having agreed to his suggestion that I should take over from him the presidency of the Council. He explained that he had made the request owing to the fact that he would have to play a rather prominent part himself in various difficult and delicate questions, and he preferred, therefore, to have a free hand. He wished me particularly to understand that by renouncing his presidency it was not the intention of

his Government to make any sort of demonstration against the League or [show] any lack of confidence in it.

He then turned to the question of the German minority in Upper Silesia. He emphasised that he had no desire or intention to raise the question of the revision of the frontiers, and he wished to keep the discussion strictly to the question of the proper protection of the minority. He expressed the opinion that it would be better, if possible, to dispose of the question in one single day, taking both morning and afternoon sittings, if that should prove necessary; he did not want the discussion to be begun one day and then adjourned to the next, as that gave an opportunity for all kinds of press propaganda to be started in the interval of twenty-four hours. I said that I would do my best to fall in with his proposal, and suggested that we might, perhaps, devote the whole of Wednesday to the discussion of this question.

I added that my idea had been that we might dispose of a certain number of less important questions on Monday, and that on Tuesday we might take the item relating to the Disarmament Conference. On this Dr. Curtius spoke on the need of holding the conference at the earliest possible moment, and said that his Government would press for the date being fixed in November next. He observed that every conference had at least one crisis; if the Disarmament Conference met early in November, that might give them a full six weeks before Christmas. Six weeks gave time enough for a crisis to develop, and it might therefore be opportune to be able to adjourn for a short while at Christmas and reassemble later on, having resolved the crisis in a proper Christmas spirit. The conference might then resume, perhaps towards the latter part of January, and finish its work.

I told him that, though I myself might have been in favour of holding the conference this year, I was bound to say that I had found that there would be considerable opposition, notably on the part of the French Government, who seemed to have made up their minds that it could not open until February 1932 at the earliest.

Dr. Curtius then referred to the proposal that the Council should appoint Dr. Benes chairman of the Disarmament Conference. He assured me that he had no sort of personal objection to Dr. Benes himself, but he was convinced that if Dr. Benes, who was commonly regarded as being unduly subject to French influence, were appointed at the outset chairman of the conference, that would produce a wave of pessimism in Germany and possibly elsewhere. Moreover, he evidently took exception to the plans for preparation of the conference, which have been generally canvassed, that Dr. Benes and two assistants should centralise the negotiations and act as intermediaries between the various Governments. He said that the intervention of Dr. Benes as an intermediary between the German Government and, for example, the French Government, would be 'unwelcome.' It soon came out that the American Ambassador in Berlin had made representations to the German Government on the lines of the observations made to Sir R. Lindsay in Washington. Dr. Curtius said that the American Government had suggested to him that the proper way of preparing for this conference was for the Great

Powers to get together and to take charge of the conversations themselves, and that the intermediary [*sic*] of Dr. Benes or some such personality would be undesirable.

While agreeing that everything would depend on agreement between the Great Powers, I said that without some form of organisation—some committee, for instance, to initiate and collate the results of the conversations—it would be difficult to organise the work properly. I added, in conclusion, that I had found here a very strong current of opinion in favour of the original plan of entrusting the preparations to Dr. Benes. At this point the conversation was broken off, as both Dr. Curtius and I had to attend the meeting of the Commission of Enquiry for European Union.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For further discussions with the German Government with regard to the preparations for the Disarmament Conference, see Vol. III of this series.

### No. 348

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin)*

*No. 141 [W 1281/47/98]*

Sir,

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 12, 1931*

With reference to your despatch No. 87<sup>1</sup> of the 31st January, I transmit to your Excellency herewith a copy of a record, communicated by His Majesty's Ambassador at Paris, of a conversation between a member of his staff and a member of the German Embassy in regard to the German attitude towards disarmament.

2. I have for some time past viewed with anxiety the development of German opinion on the subject of disarmament, and I think that the time has come when you should have a full and frank discussion with the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject. You should say that you assume it to be the fervent desire of the German Government, as it is of His Majesty's Government, that the Disarmament Conference shall be a success, and you should add that the success of the conference will imply, in the firm opinion of His Majesty's Government, not a stabilisation of the present level of armaments, but, as I said at the recent session of the Council, 'an effective scheme for armament reduction.' In this task they count on the collaboration of all the Governments of the world, and not least on that of the German Government; and it is because of certain growing signs that the full and effective co-operation of the latter Government cannot be counted on that I am instructing you to make this appeal to Dr. Curtius.

3. It appears to be readily assumed in some circles that Germany, being virtually disarmed, has no rôle to fulfil in the matter of disarmament but that of complainant, and that she cannot be regarded as sharing the common responsibility for the success or failure of the conference. From such an assumption I must emphatically dissent. The German Government must be aware that the ideal of complete, or anything like complete, disarmament,

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. This despatch summarized German press comments on Viscount Cecil's attitude towards the disarmament question.

is not at the present moment within the sphere of practical politics. Disarmament can at best only be a gradual process, achieved by degrees at successive conferences. The degree of actual disarmament, *i.e.*, of the reduction of existing armaments, which can be attained at the first Disarmament Conference, will depend in large measure on the psychological atmosphere which can be created during the year which will intervene before the conference meets; and the German Government, by their attitude both before and during the conference, can play an important rôle in determining the limits of that reduction. If the German Government sincerely desire to secure at the conference the maximum reduction of armaments, they will do everything in their power to dissipate that atmosphere of mistrust which would inevitably react in the most unfavourable manner on its work. A policy of endeavouring to extort disarmament by menaces is one which, on sober reflexion, can scarcely commend itself to the German Government.

4. I appreciate the fact that no responsible spokesman of the German Government has endorsed the demand that Germany should denounce the disarmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles as compensation for any failure of the other parties to the treaty to disarm; and I leave it entirely to your discretion whether to refer to the remarks made, in an ostensibly unofficial capacity, by a member of the German Embassy at Paris. But you should leave no doubt in his Excellency's mind that the attitude implied in such remarks, whether adopted by officials in the service of the German Government or by more or less authoritative organs of the press, does a grave disservice to the cause of disarmament, which the German Government profess to have at heart. It not only suggests a lack of any sense of the responsibility which devolves on the German Government to do their utmost to promote the success of the conference. It definitely places a weapon in the hands of those who accuse the German Government of desiring, not disarmament, but rearmament, and who are only too ready to argue from this premise that European disarmament is, in face of such an attitude, impossible.

5. You should make it clear to Dr. Curtius that it is not my present purpose to enter into any controversy regarding the merits of the draft convention as a whole or of any part of it. But I would most earnestly urge Dr. Curtius and the German Government, in the interval which remains, to put on one side the somewhat cynical attitude of detachment which they have felt obliged to adopt during the past months, and to work whole-heartedly in the common cause, both by doing their utmost to restrain the responsible leaders of German opinion from provocative utterance and action and by endeavouring to create that atmosphere of international loyalty and confidence in which alone the conference can hope to succeed.

6. Your remarks should be regarded as a friendly and informal conversation, and not in any sense as an official *démarche*.

7. You may, if you think fit, add, as coming personally from yourself, that you think there is every reason to deplore the personal attacks on Lord Cecil, which have formed so disagreeable a feature of recent references to disarmament in the German press. Anyone familiar with public opinion in this

country will realise that such attacks, particularly on one who has in the past rendered such signal services to the cause of disarmament, are damaging only to their authors and to the cause which they profess to plead.

I am, &c.

ARTHUR HENDERSON

ENCLOSURE IN No. 348

[W 459/47/98]

*Memorandum by Mr. Wigram*

A member of the German Embassy called here on the 5th January and said that he wished to speak to me privately and unofficially about the German attitude to disarmament. In the course of a long exposition of his views he said that German opinion would not tolerate the indefinite continuance of a situation in which Germany was in a position of inequality as compared with the other European countries, and that a most unfavourable impression had been created in Germany by our concession to the French about the reserves. There was now one law for the French and the Italians, who were allowed a short service army, and one for the Germans, who might only have a professional army based on a twelve-year service system. In the case of the French and Italians, reserves had apparently no military value; in the case of the Germans, they were a menace to Europe. *He said that he wondered what would happen if the German Government announced one day that they could put up with this no longer, and that they must have some kind of short service army too.* As this is the second time that a statement of this character has been made to me by the German Embassy (the last occasion was about ten days before the meeting of the Disarmament Commission, when I was given almost exactly the sense of the declaration subsequently made by Count Bernstorff at Geneva), I took the opportunity this time to say that I did not suppose the German Government would take action of this kind if they thought it would be opposed by the other Powers who were parties to the treaty. My informant then said that, of course, he only meant that the German Government would raise the matter under article 19 of the Covenant, but he made no mention of article 19 at first. He then referred to the tendency of the opposition in Germany to claim that Locarno came too soon, and he said that that opposition (to which he stated that he did not belong) contended that Germany had then confirmed the treaty abandonment of Alsace by a premature voluntary declaration of renunciation without obtaining sufficient counter-concessions. What struck me here was not so much that he forgot about the evacuation which was gained for Germany by Locarno, but that he gave me the impression that this time, and in contrast with the voluntary German renunciation of Alsace obtained at Locarno, a blustering German attitude on disarmament (which would not necessarily be maintained) would be a means of securing concessions in other spheres, notably the Corridor.

2. He added that he did not want to see rearmament in Europe, but that rearmament would come unless the French gave way about the reserves.

He said, in conclusion, that his Ambassador shared these views, and I gathered that I was expected to repeat what he said, though with discretion.

3. It is stated in Paris that there are in the capital at the moment a number of unofficial Germans who are working on behalf of the German military authorities to make contact with the French military authorities and to endeavour to convert the latter to their point of view respecting some change in the period of service in Germany. The French are said to be resisting strongly. In this connexion, my attention has been drawn to the speech made by the Chief of the German General Staff to the French military attaché at Berlin on the latter's departure from his post (see Sir H. Rumbold's despatch No. 993<sup>1</sup> of the 11th December).

PARIS, *January 8, 1931.*

<sup>1</sup> Notprinted. In this despatch Sir H. Rumbold reported that the speech in question contained a clear demand for 'equality of status' for the German Army. In the speech (a typed copy of which was afterwards given to the French military attaché) the German Chief of Staff said that 'the German Army is not opposed to a just and honourable understanding, out of which sincere friendship might develop. This development, however, must be founded on equality of status.' For a memorandum on the military situation in Germany in January 1930, see Appendix II, p. 598.

#### No. 349

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received February 17)*  
*No. 113 [C 1045/11/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, *February 13, 1931*

In my despatch No. 112<sup>1</sup> of the 12th instant, I reported the action of the National Socialists and German Nationalists in leaving the Reichstag on the 10th instant. The first reflection which occurs to the observer as the result of the above incident is that the Reichstag now has a majority of the Left—the Social Democrats and Communists outnumbering the Centre and the other moderate parties. Should the two parties on the extreme Right continue to absent themselves, the Brüning Government might, in certain contingencies, be placed in a position of considerable difficulty. I gather, however, that whilst the turn which events have taken is unwelcome to the Government, the latter are not really anxious about the future course of proceedings.

2. I had a long conversation on the subject last night with the Chancellor's Secretary of State, who has served under successive Chancellors for a number of years, and is, perhaps, the most reliable source to whom I could apply for information regarding the parliamentary situation. Dr. Pünder confirmed what Dr. Curtius had said to me in the morning regarding the undesirability of the absence of an opposition to the Government. He thought that the Hugenberg Nationalists would speedily return to the Reichstag, and he informed me in confidence that, in order to put this matter to the test, the

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. The National Socialists and German Nationalists withdrew from the Reichstag as a protest against the amendment of the standing orders with regard to procedure.

Government were arranging to take the estimates for the Ministry of Economics on Saturday next, the 14th instant. It seemed inconceivable that the German Nationalists would wish to be absent when these estimates were under consideration. He did not think that there was any danger of the Social Democrats exploiting the fact that they now could, with the help of the Communists, command a majority in the Reichstag as left by the secession of the two parties of the Right. He paid a tribute to the manner in which the Social Democrats had been behaving. Of course, he added, the Chancellor was in constant touch with the Social Democratic leaders, and attempted to meet their views as far as he could.

3. On my enquiring whether, supposing the Reichstag remained as at present constituted, the Government might not have difficulties with the Social Democrats when the estimates for the Reichswehr came up for discussion, Dr. Pünder replied that there was no reason to fear any such difficulties. There had already been consultations between the Chancellor and his predecessor, who had been accompanied by Drs. Hilferding and Breitscheid. The Reichswehr estimates would be slightly less than those presented by Dr. Hilferding himself when he was Minister of Finance in the former Government. He did not, therefore, see how the Social Democratic leaders could object to the estimates which would be presented by the Brüning Government.

4. I told Dr. Pünder that I had heard from quite authoritative sources that the National Socialists would soon be back again in the Reichstag. He said he did not agree. He did not think they would return. In withdrawing from the Reichstag they had acted under the orders of Hitler. The Government knew that Hitler did not really wish to be in a position to take over power. It was for that reason that he kept on affirming that the National Socialists must seek to obtain power by legal means, knowing perfectly well that it would be a very long time before they could achieve this end, even if they could ever do so. A section of the party did not agree with Hitler's view and was in favour of more violent action. In fact, the National Socialist leaders were at sixes and sevens, but, in spite of this, Dr. Pünder confirmed the opinion which I have already expressed on various occasions, namely, that the National Socialists are still gaining adherents to their cause. He added that the National Socialist Deputies would now go into their electoral districts and try and stir up as much trouble as possible. This might lead to clashes with the Communists and Reichsbanner, but there was no question of anything in the nature of a 'Putsch.'

5. In my despatch No. 111<sup>1</sup> of the 5th ultimo, I expressed the view that the new year had opened for Germany on a note of serious anxiety and expectation, and that the anxiety was caused by the uncertainty of the internal political situation. The proceedings in the Reichstag since the House met on the 3rd instant have tended to dispel the anxiety to which I drew attention. I have, indeed, noticed an undoubted *détente* in the political situation, amounting almost to a revival of confidence. This is due to a variety of causes. The

<sup>1</sup> No. 344.

Chancellor's speech has been a contributing factor. The gloomy forecasts of the result of Dr. Curtius's mission to Geneva have not been realised. Even his political enemies have had to admit that he presented Germany's case ably and scored something of a success. The large majorities secured by Dr. Brüning on the various questions which had been submitted to the vote in the opening days of the present session have impressed public opinion as again revealing the Chancellor's qualities of leadership on the one hand, and as indicating, on the other, that the political parties have realised the necessity of standing up to the extremists. An acquaintance of mine from East Prussia, who is a German Nationalist by conviction, recently informed me that Herr von Oldenburg-Januschau, who is the incarnation of Prussian Junkerdom and has sat in the Reichstag for over forty years, had expressed to him the view that Dr. Brüning was the first real Chancellor Germany had had since the days of Bismarck.

6. But whilst there are distinct signs of improvement in the political situation and more confidence in economic circles, owing, perhaps, to a recent rise on the Stock Exchange and to the prospect of French participation in the financing of railway shares sold by the German Government, it would be premature to think that the tide has turned. Unemployment is very severe and has almost touched 4·8 million mark, though the rate of increase has slackened of late. There is a likelihood of a considerable budget deficit, and I do not detect any present signs of an improvement in trade and industry.

I am, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

No. 350

*Mr. A. Henderson to Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin)*

*No. 165 [C 945/11/18]*

Sir,

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 19, 1931*

Your Excellency's despatch No. 47<sup>1</sup> of the 16th January, together with various other reports, give a somewhat dark picture of the present situation in Germany, and while it is no doubt true that Herr Brüning has recently consolidated his position by the courageous speeches he has been making, both in the country and in the Reichstag, I am not satisfied that the situation in Germany can as yet be regarded with equanimity.

2. The fall of the Brüning Government in the present period of political and economic strain might easily have far-reaching detrimental effects on international relationships. If, therefore, there is a real danger of its not being able to weather the storm to which it is likely to be exposed in the near future, it ought, I consider, to be the policy of His Majesty's Government to give it such support and encouragement as they properly can, in order to fortify its position. In what manner and to what extent His Majesty's Government would be willing and able to extend such assistance is a matter which would

<sup>1</sup> No. 346.



need careful consideration in the light of the circumstances existing at the time when it was required. The more immediate question which I now wish to put to your Excellency is whether, as far as can be foreseen, you consider that during the coming period of strain the present German Government will be able to maintain control of the situation, both economic and politic, in Germany; or whether, in your opinion, it would be wise to anticipate that in the near future it may be either overthrown by the action, parliamentary or otherwise, of the extremist political parties, or else swept off its feet by the growing economic pressure on the body politic. In either event, I should be glad to know what, in your view, are likely to be the repercussions of such a collapse, first, on the internal structure of Germany, and, secondly, on the relations between Germany and the outer world.

3. I realise that it may be difficult for you to draw any very definite conclusions from a situation which is so constantly changing at the present time, but I trust that you will nevertheless be able to give me a general appreciation of the present position and of existing tendencies, which will enable me to decide whether or not His Majesty's Government will do well to shape their course on the assumption that a collapse having serious international repercussions in Germany may be reasonably expected in the present circumstances.

4. Another point on which I would like enlightenment is how far the German Government is itself contemplating in the international field any special measures as would strengthen its position at home and ward off the impending danger. May I, for instance, take it that the German Government intended to employ the Upper Silesian frontier at the League Council for this purpose, and that the result of the German<sup>1</sup> debates have redounded to their credit, and have to that extent enhanced its authority in Germany?

5. I have noted with interest the change of policy shown in Herr Brüning's recent speeches, in which he has deprecated as premature any immediate demand for a moratorium under the Young plan or for a revision of the plan itself. But I have the impression that this demand is only being kept in reserve, and that the German Government still intends to use it, if the need arises, as a means of relieving the internal pressure to which it may be subjected.

6. Again, it has recently been brought to my notice that the German Government has been sounding the United States Government as to the possibility of an international economic conference being convoked, in order to devise a cure for the world crisis. It is possible that such an economic and financial conference might do a good deal to help overcome the present depression, if it could be initiated under the proper auspices. For this purpose, however, it would be absolutely essential, first, that both the United States and France should be ready actively to promote the success of such a conference, and, secondly, that it should be free to deal with the whole range of existing difficulties, including inter-Allied debts and reparations, gold distribution, international lending, tariffs, cartels, &c. At the present time,

<sup>1</sup> This word should read 'Geneva'.

unfortunately, there seems no prospect whatever that these conditions could be fulfilled, and so long as that is the case it is clearly premature for His Majesty's Government to associate themselves with any attempt to press for such a conference.

7. These considerations make it undesirable for your Excellency to say anything which might encourage the German Government to hope for success along this line, but it would nevertheless be useful if you could give me your views as to the present feeling in Germany with regard to the idea of an economic conference, and also if you could ascertain discreetly what response, if any, the German Government has received at Washington in reply to its enquiries.

I am, &c.

ARTHUR HENDERSON

No. 351

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received March 3)*

*No. 123 [C 1354/136/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, *February 24, 1931*

I have the honour to report that I had an interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day for the purpose of carrying out the instructions in your despatch No. 141<sup>1</sup> of the 12th instant.

2. Before going to see Dr. Curtius, I had prepared a German version of paragraphs 2-5 of your despatch in order that he should be placed in exact possession of your views on the subject of the German attitude to the disarmament question. In this German version I included, without revealing my authority, a reference to the remarks which had been made by a member of the German Embassy at Paris to Mr. Wigram on the 5th January last, mentioning these remarks as an example of what I had heard was being said by officials of the German Government. The only modification which I introduced into the German version was to substitute the words 'cold and detached' for the word 'cynical,' in paragraph 5, which characterises the attitude of the German Government to the disarmament question. I felt that the use of the word 'cynical' would greatly and unnecessarily irritate Dr. Curtius and increase the difficulties of a communication which could, on the whole, anyhow not be palatable to him. I also felt that the expression 'cynical' applied more justly to Count Bernstorff's attitude than to that of the German Government.

3. I began by saying that I was sure that Dr. Curtius realised how much His Majesty's Government had the cause of disarmament at heart, and I reminded him of the speech which you had recently made, in which you had said that the peoples themselves had the means of making the Disarmament Conference a success by bringing pressure to bear on their Governments to reduce armaments. I told him that I had come to him with instructions from you to have a frank, friendly and informal conversation with him on

<sup>1</sup> No. 348.

the subject of the German attitude towards disarmament, and that he must not regard my visit as in any sense an official *démarche*.

4. At this point Dr. Curtius interrupted me to say that he had already been turning over in his mind the expediency of a consultation with the Chancellor and his relevant colleagues and officials with a view to deciding the line to be followed by Germany in view of the forthcoming Disarmament Conference. He would not, therefore, be able to make any definite observations to-day on what I might have to say to him, but would ask me to come and see him again after he had gone into the disarmament question with the Chancellor and the relevant Ministers.

5. I then read to him the German version of your despatch under reply, and he took notes of what I said.

6. I went on to point out that it was, of course, my duty to follow, as far as I could, the development of German opinion in the matter of disarmament and to report to you on the German attitude to this question. I read to him some of the passages from my despatch No. 1033<sup>1</sup> of the 31st December last, reporting on Herr Hagermann's volume of political essays, and in particular paragraphs 2 and 4<sup>2</sup> of that despatch. I said that if Germany approached the disarmament problem in a spirit of pessimism it would get her nowhere. She must help to create the necessary atmosphere in which alone the success of the conference could be hoped for. I also read to him paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of my despatch No. 87<sup>3</sup> of the 31st January last as instancing, on the one hand, the thesis held in certain quarters here that other nations have to disarm, failing which Germany must be allowed to rearm, and, on the other hand, the unjust criticisms of Lord Cecil's attitude at Geneva as described in the Chancellor's organ, 'Germania.' Finally, I informed Dr. Curtius that I had reported Count Bernstorff's recent open letter on the subject of the draft convention which had been published in the 'Berliner Tageblatt' on the 14th February (please see my despatch No. 122<sup>4</sup> of the 14th February).

7. After I had finished, Dr. Curtius said that he must at once take strong exception to the description of the attitude of the German Government as 'somewhat cold and detached.' He must, in fact, protest against such a description. It must be remembered that ever since the elections in September last the German Government had been engaged in a desperate struggle with the parties of the Right both as regards Germany's attitude towards the League of Nations and the disarmament question. The parties of the Right had taken the line that the League of Nations had proved a failure

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. Herr Hagermann was diplomatic correspondent of *Germania*. Mgr Kaas, in a preface to this volume of essays, called attention to the revisionist programme which had been supported by 'all German Governments since Versailles', and stated that 'the German Samson will not allow himself to be harnessed for life to the treadmill of Versailles'.

<sup>2</sup> These paragraphs summarized Herr Hagermann's view (i) that other Powers were unlikely to disarm, and (ii) that if they did not disarm, Germany could claim the right to ignore the clauses in the Treaty of Versailles limiting her own armaments.

<sup>3</sup> See No. 348, note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Not printed. Count Bernstorff's letter was mainly a criticism of proposals for budgetary limitation of expenditure on armaments.

inasmuch as it had not brought about any measure of disarmament. They demanded, therefore, that Germany should leave the League and denounce the disarmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles. He had combated this point of view to the utmost of his power both in committee of the Reichstag and in speeches. It was, therefore, very unjust to describe the attitude of the German Government as one of 'cold detachment' to the disarmament question, and he hoped that you would take into account what he had just said to me and would have a regard for the difficulties of the German Government. His Government stood for disarmament and not for rearmament.

8. In his view, the Great Powers, *i.e.*, Germany, France, England and Italy, should get together and decide on the line of action to be followed at the Disarmament Conference. He counted on His Majesty's Government to exert their utmost influence to secure a real reduction in the land armaments of the continental States. Until lately he had understood that the United States Government were deeply interested in the success of the conference, but he had recently had private information to the effect that that Government had rather lost their interest in what they preferred to consider a purely European question. Had I anything to corroborate this information? I replied in the negative.

9. Dr. Curtius then of his own accord alluded to Lord Cecil, and I took the opportunity of saying that the attacks which had been made on Lord Cecil in the German press had produced a most disagreeable impression on British public opinion. He must know quite well that nobody had done more for the cause of disarmament than Lord Cecil, who had devoted himself heart and soul to that cause. Dr. Curtius observed that there had been an impression in Germany that, in order to come to some arrangement with France about a reduction of naval armaments, His Majesty's Government tended to disinterest themselves in the reduction of land armaments. This belief, perhaps, accounted for the attacks on Lord Cecil, but Dr. Curtius spontaneously admitted that all his experts paid tribute to Lord Cecil's single-mindedness and devotion to the cause of disarmament. I may add that your present visit to Paris and Rome in connexion with the naval treaty conversations has tended, in some quarters, to revive the suggestion that any understanding with France must necessarily be at the expense of Germany.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

### No. 352

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received March 2)*

*No. 137<sup>1</sup> [C 13.13/136/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, February 26, 1931

Disarmament has been a theme for discussion in this country since President Wilson first enunciated his fourteen points before Congress in January 1918. The discussion was desultory and theoretical until the Preparatory Disarma-

<sup>1</sup> This despatch was drafted before Sir H. Rumbold had received No. 348.

ment Commission embarked on its labours in the year 1926. The proceedings of that commission, its ultimate findings and the fixing of the date of the plenary conference furnished a basis for more concrete discussion, and I feel that the time has come when I may endeavour to outline the attitude of the public in this country towards the general question of disarmament.

2. German official opinion will be sufficiently familiar to you from the attitude and utterances of the German delegation at the Preparatory Conference, from such recent statements as that of General Groener on the 29th November last (see my despatch No. 962<sup>1</sup> of the 2nd December) as well as the speech of Dr. Curtius in the Reichstag on the 10th February. In the last resort on a question of this kind, official opinion must be largely determined by the attitude of the country itself.

3. German military opinion is not a matter of much concern at the moment. The German military authorities claim equality of treatment ('Gleichberechtigung'). They claim the right to increase the strength of the existing professional army or revert to universal obligatory service as they deem fit. Naturally they demand the removal of all the restrictions imposed by the Treaty of Versailles, that is to say, the right to rearm Germany in the manner most suited to her needs.

4. Public opinion in this country, like public opinion in most countries, is based on a skeleton of facts or arguments on any given question as presented by the press and as contained in the utterances of political leaders. Before dealing with German opinion, it may be useful to run over the skeleton of facts and conclusions on which it is based.

5. Germany accepted an armistice on the basis of the fourteen points of President Wilson, a basis which all the belligerents accepted at the time. The fourth of these points ran as follows:—

'Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with *domestic* safety.'

The basic idea of disarmament was thus accepted in principle. Germany counted at that time on a more or less general scramble to disarm as soon as the peace terms were accepted. She herself cast off her panoply and awaited events. No sooner did the Peace Conference meet and broach the theme of limitation of armaments than M. Clemenceau was on his feet proclaiming the doctrine to which France has since clung unswervingly, the doctrine of French security. There followed the slow and methodical disarmament of Germany. The man in the street witnessed, with a certain detachment, the diligent labours of foreign military experts who thoroughly disarmed Germany. Then followed a period of German demands and re-criminations until, in 1926, the Preparatory Commission embarked on its labours at Geneva.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. In his speech of November 29 General Groener spoke of the 'solemn obligation' on the Powers 'to follow up the disarmament of Germany by general disarmament. If by disarmament of the nations is understood the subjection of one country to defencelessness, the deprivation of one country of the right of self-defence, then . . . this demand for disgraceful compliance will never be fulfilled by the German nation.'

6. Wilson's fourth point was watered down at Versailles during the discussions on the Covenant of the League, and article 8 now appears in the Covenant as included in the Treaty of Versailles in the following form: 'The members of the League recognise that the maintenance of peace requires the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with *national* safety, and the enforcement by common action of international obligations.' In the Treaty of Versailles itself, the principle was included in the notorious preface to Part V: 'In order to render possible the initiation of the general limitation of the armaments of all nations, Germany undertakes strictly to observe the military, naval and air clauses which follow.' German opinion from the extreme Right to the extreme Left construed this preface at the time to mean that German disarmament was to be followed by general disarmament. Any Government which attempts at this stage to correct this popular conception would not remain long in office.

7. The proceedings of the Preparatory Commission were, therefore, followed with close attention, but the commission made slow progress. As the man in the street learnt from his press, the arts of evasion and obstruction were practised by master hands in the effort to postpone action and evade the undertaking implicit in so many treaties. A zealous upholder at that time of the principles of the League and one of the pioneers of the disarmament movement in Germany, Count Bernstorff, was delegated by Dr. Stresemann to represent the German case. From time to time the German Government protested against the delay, whereupon fresh homage was paid to the principle but little to the practice of disarmament. Finally, at the close of the year 1930 the German citizen learnt that after five years of talk a scheme had at last been devised, but only in the teeth of the opposition of Germany's representative. The essential feature of the scheme as ultimately adopted was, he learned, the budgetary limitation of armaments. This, his press and politicians tell him, is precisely what the Allied experts forgot to include in the Treaty of Versailles. In other words, by way of redeeming the promise to disarm, the one loophole left in the treaty was to be filled up. It will be hard to convince him that his enemies have not been scheming to rob him of his due.

8. 'On practically all essential points,' as the 'Temps' assured him, 'the French thesis was accepted by the Preparatory Commission.' The exclusion of trained reserves and the limitation of military expenditure were concessions for which he noted that the disarmament commission received the thanks of the French press of the Right. It must not be forgotten that his experience of military control helps the average German to judge which forms of supervision are effective. The prisoner is the best judge of the security of the prison.

9. It is as well to point out here that in the litany of German grievances disarmament is underlined in red for the reason that it constitutes an Allied obligation towards Germany and not a German obligation towards the Allies. The Treaty of Locarno conveys a similar assurance, but German opinion is less impressed by it than by the relevant clause in the Treaty of

Versailles. For the latter treaty, being the instrument by which Germany herself was effectively disarmed, carries more weight in her eyes than even Locarno or the Covenant of the League. It is possibly because successive Governments were able to point to the advent of general disarmament that so much self-control was shown by the population during the humiliating years of disarmament at the hands of Allied officers.

10. Most Germans have no affection for disarmament in the abstract. They do not regard it as an ideal. On the other hand, the war of 1914 taught them that disputes are seldom equitably settled by an appeal to arms, that the country which has recourse to force is no more likely to be victorious than the duellist who has right on his side. Their attitude to disarmament, on the whole, is subjective. They feel that so long as they remain disarmed in the midst of nations which are at liberty to arm to the extent that their finances allow, they are not in a position of equality among the peoples of the world. Their feelings are comparable to those which inspire the Chinese to talk of 'unequal treaties.' 'Germany,' a member of the Cabinet, recently declared 'cannot for ever tolerate being treated as a pariah amongst the nations.'

11. There was, it is true, at one time a strong pacifist party in this country. Even during the war men like Count Bernstorff, Professor Schücking, the editors of newspapers like the 'Berliner Tageblatt' and the 'Frankfurter Zeitung' had the hardihood to assert within hearing of the High Command that war was an unsatisfactory criterion. As will be shown later, this party is no longer likely to prove a useful ally in the cause of disarmament.

12. It is by considering concrete cases, namely, the nations surrounding Germany, that we arrive most easily at Germany's desiderata, and, in this way, at her ultimate aims, if not her policy, in this question. In theory there are four nations to be considered, France, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Poland. For all practical purposes we may eliminate Belgium and Czechoslovakia, since it is inconceivable that either country would embark on a war of aggression against Germany. There remain France and Poland. The idea of an 'attaque brusquée' by Germany on France, or for that matter by France on Germany, need not be seriously entertained. General Hammerstein, who commands the Reichsheer, in a recent conversation with me, expressed the view that no nation in the world wished for another war.

13. Nothing is so elusive as the German attitude towards France, but this much can be safely committed to paper. *Vis-à-vis* France, the German conscience is uneasy. German armies have violated French territory three times in a century. They invaded and humiliated France in 1870. They ravaged her territory again from 1914 to 1918. The average German recognises that there is something in the French claim for security. He, for his part, has little fear of French aggression, except in the event of a Polish-German struggle. The German Government, on the other hand, cannot admit that the French thesis is valid. To do so would involve the admission that Poland could likewise lay claim to special treatment so long as Russia was an unknown factor. To some extent Germany is flattered by France's trepidation,

by this persistent inferiority complex *vis-à-vis* herself. But even if she wished, she dare not admit the French thesis lest other countries should adopt it in turn. For if it be admitted that France cannot disarm, it follows that France's neighbours cannot disarm. All nations have only to take their stand on security, and the matter, she realises, is ended.

14. On the other hand, Germany notes with suspicion that France adopts the same attitude regarding her armaments at sea and in the air. She therefore concludes that France wishes to preserve her hegemony in Europe for as long as possible, and that her fear of invasion is only a plausible pretext.

15. The difficulties of the French position are understood at least by enlightened opinion in this country. It is recognised that France's fear of invasion, though quite unfounded in German opinion, calls for special concessions on Germany's part. The treaty gave her the demilitarised zone, the reduction of the German army to a nucleus, and other military restrictions. Then or later she obtained three further safeguards—the League, Locarno and Kellogg Pacts. She now asks for budgetary limitation, and Germany feels that it is time to call a halt. For if Germany gives this pledge, her Left parties, no matter how weak, are likely to constitute themselves watch dogs for reasons of internal policy and compel her to keep it or incur international obloquy. It would tie Germany's hands *vis-à-vis* Poland. This brings us to the essence of the problem, the Franco-Polish-German triangle.

16. In her quest for permanent safety, France set up a system of alliances in which Poland was chosen to replace Russia as the principal French ally. To strengthen her ally, argues the average German, she assigned German territory to her. Now Germany might, he adds, grow accustomed to the spectacle of half a million Frenchmen lounging about barrack squares while she herself remained disarmed, were it not for the aggrandisement of Poland at her expense.

17. It is the German attitude towards Poland which, for practical purposes, governs her attitude towards disarmament. Here, says German opinion, is a country rescued by German arms from Russian tyranny and restored by Germans to independence, a people whom Germany gladly welcomed back to the comity of nations on purely liberal grounds and apart altogether from President Wilson's tenets, but whose first action was to seize the territory of her benefactor and to amputate a German province in order to secure an outlet to the sea. This nation, lower than Germany in the plane of civilisation, is put on a higher plane by the Treaty of Versailles, and given freedom to arm, while Germany is cribbed and confined at every turn by the military clauses of the Versailles Treaty. German opinion draws the conclusion that Poland will only listen to reason if faced by a German army of equal strength. It is felt that the disarmament clause in the Treaty of Versailles is one of the few instruments that might serve to redress the balance. But by hook or by crook Germany will endeavour to reach parity with Poland. For reasons of finance and political expediency it would obviously be better for Germany if Poland disarmed to her level. Whether such parity be reached



by disarmament down to Germany's level or rearmament up to Poland's level is the real question.

18. If the problem of Germany's eastern frontier were settled, would Germany disarm, it might be asked? Were Poland to disarm, Germany would presumably remain disarmed as she is. This brings us to the Polish difficulty—her contiguity with Soviet Russia. Whether Germany could contribute to Polish security by entering into a joint guarantee with Soviet Russia, recovering the Corridor by way of commission, is a question which is outside my purview. In the meantime, it would seem that Poland must remain armed, and thus constitute the main obstacle to German disarmament. Time after time in recent years the Reichswehr estimates have been saved by a timely reference to the eastern frontier, and it is not so long since Germany, despite her financial embarrassments, decided to utilise the permission accorded her by the treaty to reconstruct a fleet of ships largely to safeguard her communications with East Prussia. In the year which has just elapsed, despite financial stringency, the Reichstag granted further funds to the amount of 30 million marks over a number of years for the fortification of the East Prussian frontier; the political parties made no difficulties worth mentioning.

19. Although the logical outcome of the German argument that the Treaty of Versailles is being violated in the matter of disarmament would be denunciation of the treaty or assertion of the right to rearm, it is to be noted that only the National Socialists and Nationalist groups have so far advanced such a claim. No official quarter has drawn such a conclusion, and public opinion is still very far from taking this view.

20. It has been suggested in some quarters that Germany is at heart more anxious to rearm than to disarm. This theory deserves examination. There are two ways by which rearmament could be effected. The present long-service force of 100,000 men could be extended, as General von Seeckt advocates, to two or even 300,000 with its due complement of tanks, aeroplanes and big guns. On financial grounds, there would be grave objections to this course. Pay is six times, food four times as much per head as in 1914. For this and other reasons the long-service system has proved and is proving extremely expensive. It is foreign to the German character. Conscription, on the other hand, for which the senior officers now in control of the Reichswehr would unhesitatingly vote, is, if anything, more objectionable for political reasons. Conscription originated in Germany and constituted the bed-rock on which the Prussian monarchy was established. It is part and parcel of the reactionary tradition. As such, it would be resisted with the utmost determination by the Left parties, which polled over 14 million votes in the election of September 1930. Defeat gave the German electorate effective control over their own affairs, and they promptly abolished conscription to ensure themselves against a return of military autocracy. The country has now become accustomed to the comfortable ways of peace, and so irksome an institution as conscription would probably rouse the additional opposition of the peasantry on whom it pressed more heavily than on the

industrial workers. For these reasons there is probably a majority in Germany at this moment which would prefer that her neighbours should disarm to her level.

21. On one point popular opinion is in unison with the army. The restrictions imposed on the Reichswehr in the matter of size and choice of weapons must be abolished. Owing to the fact that East Prussia is isolated from Germany, the actual defence or rescue of East Prussia can only be effected by a counter-attack on the Polish frontier from Germany west of the Corridor. Supposing, it is argued, that a frontier incident led to a Polish invasion and occupation of part of East Prussia, the outer world and the League, after exhausting their arguments to bring Poland to reason, might suffer Germany to take action on her own behalf. But the German army, denuded of tanks, aeroplanes and weapons of offence, would be gravely handicapped. In the event of complete failure of the Disarmament Conference, public opinion might endorse a demand on the part of the German Government for the removal of these restrictions. The failure of the conference would, in German eyes, provide the necessary moral sanction, an important factor in the case of a country which is sensitive to the stigma implied in the Treaty of Versailles.

22. It must also be remembered that a war against Poland to rectify the eastern frontiers would be in the nature of a crusade. A large part of the population would eagerly join in it without compulsion. So that it is probable that some modified form of conscription would be the ultimate choice of the German Government if the Polish problem resisted all other solutions. The National Socialists, as well as the other parties of the Right, include conscription in their programme as a matter of course. Here it may be remarked that the qualities and virtues on which the Prussian military structure was based, frugality, self-control, implicit obedience, respect for authority, are precisely the qualities which are absent in the National Socialist movement. Paradoxically, military qualities are rather to be found among the peasantry and the trade unions, the stoutest opponents of conscription and militarism.

23. Whenever senior officers of the old army forgather, it is not the loss of weapons or material or the restrictions imposed by the treaty which they deplore. For these, they assert, can be made good when the time arrives. What they bitterly regret is the destruction of the organisation of the army and the abolition of conscription, and the consequent decay of the military spirit, the 'Wehrgeist,' the precious heritage of Frederician Prussia. This, they assert, counts for more than mere material, and every year that elapses makes its revival more difficult. They admit that the spirit of the age is contrary to its revival, and fear that the thirteen years of freedom have sapped the spirit of the old army.

24. Economic factors have an important bearing on the question of German disarmament. So long as Germany has to pay reparations the burden on her finances will preclude the lavish expenditure which the reconstruction of her army would entail. From this standpoint alone it is to be doubted whether Germany, if given a free hand, would proceed to rearm without further ado.

The Reichswehr, within its present limits, is controllable by the Governments of the day in the Reich and Prussia. Were it doubled or trebled, it might begin to exercise influence and copy the example of the Pretorian [*sic*] Guards.

25. It would, therefore, seem that, in the absence of a general agreement on disarmament, the question might ultimately arise whether Germany should increase the present army by long-service men or by some form of conscription. The decision which, as far as can be foreseen, she will be asked to take at Geneva is an important decision, because, if she agrees to budgetary control, she will ultimately veer towards the less costly conscription solution. If her expenditure remains unlimited, she may opt for a short-service volunteer army.

26. But here it must be emphasised that, in principle, the question of rearming is fraught with manifold perplexities for any German Government which might seriously contemplate it. Amongst the Left parties, particularly, it revives memories of pre-war blunders. It raises political issues of the utmost gravity, which must cause any German Government to hesitate, and it is to be doubted if any responsible Government has as yet given the question even momentary consideration.

27. The success of the National Socialist movement aroused alarm in foreign countries. The fear was expressed that Germany was returning to the policy of force and that she would have recourse before long to rearmament. This view is still held in some quarters to-day, but it fails to take due cognisance of the fact that the war of 1914 ended in disaster, and that the memory of the hardships and misery to which the inhabitants of this country, rich and poor, were subjected between 1914 and 1919, and subsequently during the inflation, has not yet faded. The new generation may be ignorant of much of this, but it is not sufficiently numerous to control German opinion.

28. Relations between the Reichswehr and the Social Democratic party, and even, to some extent, the Communist party, have improved since the success of the National Socialists. The Socialists realise that the army has for some years remained aloof from politics, and could be relied upon to suppress disorders and resist attempts to overthrow the Government of the country by violence. General Groener and the officers now controlling the Reichswehr have given convincing proof of their determination to prevent its contamination by National Socialist intrigues. Indeed, in the last resort, an electoral landslide in favour of the National Socialists would put the Reichswehr in possession of the key to the situation. Under Generals Groener and Hammerstein it is ready to recognise the authority of the Government of the day, no matter what parties support it. The Socialists no longer regard it as their bugbear.

29. An unsatisfactory, and indeed unforeseen, feature of the situation on the eve of the plenary conference is the impatience of the so-called 'fulfilment' parties, and in particular of the Democratic 'State' party. The German Government is being urged vociferously to take a firm stand and avoid compromise by those very parties which have hitherto preached disarmament on every occasion. The outcome of recent elections, especially the September

1930 elections, is responsible for this phenomenon. It will be recalled that the fulfilment parties were discouraged by the delay in fulfilling the promises made or implied at the time of Locarno. In their view, the evacuation of the Rhineland took place too slowly, and the revision of the Dawes plan was not undertaken in a sufficiently generous spirit. No progress was made with disarmament. Bright hopes of economic recovery, the real prize of fulfilment, were, moreover, smothered in an unprecedented world depression. Dr. Stresemann himself would have been attacked, not merely by the Right, but by his own party and by sections of the Centre and Democratic parties, if he had survived until the summer of 1930. The fulfilment parties felt that the elections of September constituted a sharp vote of censure on their policy. This was an exaggerated view. The Democrats and Left half of the Centre in turn blamed their Locarno partners and the League for their defeat. They then and there determined that in future they would let the other parties take the responsibility where disarmament, reparations or other national issues were concerned. The revulsion of popular feeling was also the result of several years of misgovernment, financial mismanagement and over-expenditure by a series of coalitions. But there is no doubt that the fulfilment and Locarno parties held out prospects of improvement, both territorial and financial, which proved to be unattainable within the time allowed by an impatient electorate.

30. During the past decade hopes have been entertained in this country that a peaceful settlement of the Polish-German conflict was only a matter of patience and good behaviour on Germany's part. It was confidently expected that, after Locarno, the initiative looking towards a settlement would be taken in some quarter, and that a reasonable compromise would be the ultimate result. It was felt that Germany could afford to wait. So long as the centre of gravity of the German Government was to be found among the Left parties, little actual interest was taken in the eastern provinces, the traditional strongholds of conservatism and junkerdom. It was only when Dr. Brüning took office and the evacuation of the Rhineland was complete and the moderate parties had an opportunity to throw the official limelight on to East Prussia that the urgency of the problem became evident. It was found that the last thing which Germany could afford to do was to wait indefinitely. Indeed, investigation showed that only immediate financial help could maintain the *status quo* in East Prussia and prevent the German population from following the trend of prosperity westwards and abandoning the east to the oncoming Polish tide. She now hopes to stem the tide by the vote of a fund of £50 million to be spent along the frontier during the next five years. Extensive taxation alleviations and traffic facilities on the railways have been granted, while a far-reaching and onerous programme of protection to keep out foreign food-stuffs is under consideration.

31. This recognition coincided with the discovery that Germany was day-dreaming if she counted on any help but her own for a long time to come in the Corridor problem. The importance of the disarmament question immediately became more apparent, and the German attitude may be expected

to stiffen as public opinion discerns the importance of disarming Poland to her level. It does not help matters when Germany is told, as M. Tardieu told her in November, that it is futile to rely on article 19 of the Covenant of the League for help. If German opinion is to be deprived in this way of the straws to which it clings, it will inevitably have recourse to less harmless remedies. The more Germany loses faith in the League as an instrument for correcting her eastern frontier, the more will she recognise the need for caution in accepting new commitments in the way of disarmament.

32. The German attitude reduced to its crudest form might be expressed as follows: The Allies must honour the undertaking on which the armistice was signed. Let Poland come down to our level, or let us arm up to her level, preferably the former. She, France, (*sic*) having realised that Poland is more of a liability than an asset, will one day stand aside. Russia, though utterly untrustworthy, and though her loyal military co-operation can never be relied upon, will at least contain a large Polish force on the Polish-Russian frontier. In such circumstances Poland must give way, and then at last we shall have peace in Europe.

33. In the debate on disarmament between Germany and her neighbours there are factors which inevitably create a regrettable feeling of unreality. The questions may be asked: So long as problems exist which baffle solution by consent and which seem in the last resort to await an appeal to arms, can disarmament in Europe make progress? Can Poland be expected to subject herself to disarmament when she knows that, failing a settlement by peaceful methods, her quarrel with Germany might lead to hostilities? Again, so long as Russia is an unknown factor, can Poland be expected to disarm at all, and, if Poland does not disarm, does France expect Germany to remain disarmed, and, if so, for how long? In 1940 Germany, it is said, will dispose of double as many men of military age as France, and from then until 1950 her superiority on paper increases.

34. The root idea of disarmament is to make war impossible. Disputes would then be settled by peaceful means. I have no doubt that Germany would infinitely prefer a peaceful settlement of her quarrel with Poland, but observers who are not mere sceptics are saying that it seems to be putting the cart before the horse to discuss disarmament before agreement has been reached on the machinery for composing quarrels likely to lead to war. Moreover, German opinion may possibly feel that an attempt is being made at Geneva to cauterise the wounds of Europe while poison is still present in those wounds.

35. The position as seen from here is thus one of great difficulty. I do not wish to over-state the case, but an under-statement of it, particularly at this moment, is not in the interest of the cause which we all have so much at heart.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received March 9)*  
*No. 158 [C 1506/11/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, March 4, 1931

I have read with the closest attention your despatch No. 165<sup>1</sup> of the 19th ultimo regarding the present political and economic situation in Germany, and I have the honour to preface my reply thereto with the following general observations.

2. The present development of events in this country is the product of two main factors: first, the unprecedented economic distress from which the whole world is suffering; second, a political agitation, deriving much of its immediate striking force from this economic distress, but also arising from the outburst of a nationalism suppressed or distorted by the events of the last twelve years. This double impulse is made obvious by the very name of the party which links together nationalism and socialism. But the economic crisis and the political agitation are transformed, by their very magnitude and intensity, into unknown quantities, which continually act and react upon one another. In attempting to appreciate possible developments in Germany under such conditions of strain one must remember that the situation can alter very rapidly. Elements which assume temporary importance may disappear, while others, not apparent to a superficial observer, may prove to have enduring value; and no analysis can hope to retain its validity for more than a comparatively limited period. It is, accordingly, under great reserve that I attempt to reply to the second paragraph of your despatch. I will discuss the reasons which lead me to conclude that the balance of probabilities is against a collapse taking place within the next few months, but serious difficulties are not outside the bounds of possibility, and you will appreciate that any attempt to forecast the effects, internal and international, thereof must, from the nature of things, be speculative in the extreme.

3. My despatches since the new year began will have indicated that although the year opened for Germany on a serious note of anxiety there has recently been an undoubted *détente* in the situation amounting almost to a revival of confidence. Factors in bringing this about have been the steadying effect upon the Government of the representations made by me, on your instructions, on the question of a moratorium, the salutary effect on public opinion of the subsequent 'Times' leader<sup>2</sup> of the 6th January, and the good impression made by the manner in which the League Council handled the minorities question which enhanced the authority of Dr. Curtius and revived waning confidence in the League. In public speeches made both before and after the Reichstag met on the 3rd February the Chancellor showed courageous frankness and his increasing confidence infected the leaders of the Government parties. The decision of the Centre party to wage war on the National

<sup>1</sup> No. 350.

<sup>2</sup> This article argued strongly against the German case for a moratorium.

Socialists has had a considerable effect on the moderate parties of the Right, and the large majorities obtained by Dr. Brüning in the opening days of the present session in the Reichstag again impressed public opinion with his qualities of leadership, and showed that the other political parties had at last realised the necessity of standing up to the extremists. In debate the 'Nazis' were worsted and reduced to agitation and obstruction, and their withdrawal from the House, followed by the Hugenberg Nationalists, though it produced an embarrassing situation in the Reichstag and caused some anxiety as to what they would do in the constituencies, was, in some respects, a confession of parliamentary failure. The result, moreover, was that the initiative passed to Dr. Brüning, who had hitherto been continually on the defensive against extremist pressure and attacks. Meanwhile, there are indications that the Nazi movement, though still gaining numerically, is losing glamour and momentum in the country.

4. Thus, in the political field, events have tended more and more to increase Dr. Brüning's prestige, which is at this moment far higher than that enjoyed by any of his immediate predecessors. Under his leadership the Government has shown capacity for action to an extent unprecedented in recent years, and it is only necessary to mention financial reform and assistance to agriculture to show that the present Administration are doing more and talking less than their predecessors. The political situation is still, however, complicated and difficult. The Government's agrarian programme and the political difficulties arising out of it have been dealt with in detail in my despatch No. 146<sup>1</sup> of the 2nd March.

5. Before they can adjourn the Reichstag, as they hope to do at the end of the month until the autumn, the Brüning Government have two stiff fences to negotiate. They have to induce the Social Democrats to accept their agrarian proposals, even if in a modified form, as well as the vote on account for the battleship 'B.' Negotiations are proceeding on these subjects between the Chancellor and the leaders of the Social Democratic party, but these conversations have not yet led to any result. The parliamentary position of the Brüning Government is, therefore, ticklish, though not absolutely critical. Herr Theodor Wolff, the well-informed editor of the 'Berliner Tageblatt,' informed me last night that, in his view, the difficulties would be overcome. The Social Democrats, whilst remaining in the House and thus constituting the necessary quorum, might abstain from voting on the battle-cruiser question, or possibly on both questions, thereby ensuring a Government majority.

6. It must be admitted that the Social Democratic party is in a very difficult situation. It wishes to avoid fresh elections at all costs. It has been shaken by the result of the recent municipal elections at Brunswick, in which it lost a considerable number of votes to the Communist party. It is now being asked to agree to legislative measures unpalatable to the party as a whole, which are in conflict with the Government's avowed policy of reducing prices and are calculated to lose it still more votes.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

7. In this situation the elements required to bring about a political crisis can never be far absent. On the other hand there are factors which insist that a crisis at this moment must be avoided. New elections could only profit the extremists and are out of the question. The continuance of the Brüning Government in power is still the best defence of the Social Democrats against fascism. The existence of a Centre-Social Democratic Coalition in Prussia is still playing an important part in influencing the attitude of the Social Democrats in the Reichstag. The position now is in some respects similar to that which existed at the dissolution in July last year. If Dr. Brüning were defeated in the Reichstag, he would probably carry on undeterred. If he offered to resign the President would probably insist on his remaining.

8. The balance of probability is, therefore, in my opinion that the Brüning Government will survive at least till the autumn, while in Prussia Dr. Braun will remain at the helm until the term of the present Landtag expires in May 1932.

9. You ask, nevertheless, for my views as to the repercussions of a possible collapse on the internal structure of Germany and on her relations with the outer world. Should some unforeseen circumstance or combination of circumstances result in such a collapse of the Government the first effect might be a resort to the use of dictatorial methods, but there is, in my opinion, in Germany to-day a small group of able and responsible statesmen strong enough to hold the country together and to maintain its existing structure. Such a collapse, however, might well result in a loss of confidence abroad leading to withdrawal of foreign credits, a flight from the mark, and a repetition of the financial crisis of September and October last year, the general effects of which are not easily calculable. It is, however, hardly necessary for me to remind you that the people of this country faced the vicissitude of war and its ultimate loss with remarkable fortitude. They bore their subsequent tribulations, the occupation of the Ruhr, the collapse of their currency and the ruin of valuable sections of the community, with equal patience. It is safe to say that a nation of such stout fibre, containing as it does unplumbed reserves of strength, especially in the business community is not going to fail eventually to master its difficulties.

10. Meanwhile, the economic problems confronting Dr. Brüning's Government are severe in the extreme, and I see no reason to hope that they will disappear so long as the present world crisis continues. Nevertheless, unless world conditions take a decisive turn for the worse, which would undoubtedly have disagreeable reactions in Germany, I see equally little reason to expect in the immediate future any serious deterioration of conditions in this country. The climate of Germany is such that activity in certain important industries (including building and agriculture) decreases sharply during the winter months, and may almost be brought to a standstill by a really severe winter. The present winter, which is now almost over, has been providentially mild, and the physical suffering caused by unemployment has been correspondingly reduced. It may be hoped, moreover, that seasonal unemployment has already reached its peak. There is, on the other hand, no definite evidence



as yet of a recovery of activity in industry, although the Stock Exchange, which so often forecasts industrial conditions, has, in recent weeks, shown considerable firmness.

11. From the financial aspect it may equally be said that, while the strain continues, the intensity is somewhat less. It has long been realised that the budget will close on the 31st March with a considerable deficit, now estimated at 1 milliard reichsmarks (£50 million), and public opinion will be relieved if this figure is not exceeded. The money market, although it does not share in the ease prevailing in other centres, has had time to recover from the shock of the crisis in September and October, and has effected some improvement in its general situation, while the Reichsbank has gained a certain amount of ground. As regards the short-term credit position, foreign lenders are 'marking time'. There appears to be no tendency to withdraw existing balances from Germany, nor, except in individual cases, is there a movement to increase investments in this country. The more active American bankers are perhaps beginning to take greater interest in the openings available, but do not yet seem to have the courage to make the forward movement they would probably like to take. As regards France, the effect on the market of the recent German Government credit there may in time stimulate Franco-German banking co-operation. But I am inclined to believe that the key to this matter lies rather in conditions in New York and Paris than in Berlin. So far as Germany is concerned, the flight of capital is no longer causing anxiety, although there is as yet but little evidence of repatriation of capital.

12. In these spheres, therefore, there is a justified feeling of relief that a difficult period has passed, and that, if no unforeseen trouble intervenes, some recovery may be anticipated. But the foundations are none too solid, and, although employment is expected to improve, there are at the moment nearly 5 million unemployed, taxation is high, capital is scarce, and very many businesses are doing no more than keeping afloat. Accordingly (apart from political affairs), the slowly growing feeling of confidence could be easily shattered by such possibilities as withdrawals of foreign credits, a series of bankruptcies, or a major strike on the wages question. Nor is it sufficient to take comfort from the hope that such catastrophes are, on balance, improbable. We may hope, indeed, for a breathing space during the summer months, but unless substantial progress towards real recovery has been made during this period, Dr. Brüning will be faced with all the problems arising out of a second winter of unemployment, and they will be grave indeed.

13. All this bears directly on the attitude of the German Government towards reparation, to which reference is made in paragraph 5 of your despatch. Dr. Brüning certainly continues to cherish hopes that, by careful internal and external preparation, he will eventually secure, by mutual consent, a further reduction of Germany's reparation liabilities. In this respect, and in his steadfast determination to adhere to the provisions of the Young plan, his policy cannot be said to have changed. But within these limitations he has to shape his immediate course in accordance with circumstances as

they arise. Since my conversation<sup>1</sup> with Dr. Curtius on the 10th December the Chancellor appears to have become thoroughly convinced that the disadvantages which would arise from an appeal to the safeguarding clauses in the Young plan far outweigh the partial and temporary relief which Germany would obtain therefrom, and is in no mood to yield to short-sighted pressure in this direction. This attitude appears clearly in his statement on the 25th January at Cologne (see my despatch No. 71<sup>2</sup> of the 27th January): 'The burdens imposed on the German people are not to be borne in the long run, but in order to come to an agreement with our creditors about new solutions of the reparation question we must be financially and economically prepared, and we must be ready to take responsibility (at home) for unpopular decisions. We flatly refuse to come forward on a certain day next month with demands for revision for internal political reasons.' So long as the extreme tension, such as that which prevailed from October to January, is relaxed, he should be able to maintain this attitude; but should the tension again become acute, after an interval in which no prospect of improvement in the general economic situation of the world has appeared, the popular demand for immediate relief, even at the expense of a more far-sighted policy, may force him to reconsider his position.'

14. As to the question asked in paragraph 4 of your despatch under reference, I do not believe that the German Government are contemplating in the international field any special measures in order to strengthen their position. Dr. Brüning cannot, of course, entirely ignore internal agitation, but he has repeatedly declared that he will not allow foreign policy to be dictated by internal political considerations. It is certainly true, as I reported in my despatch No. 70<sup>2</sup> of the 27th January, that the League's handling of the minorities question in Upper Silesia redounded to the credit of the German Government and enhanced its authority. But my despatches No. 16<sup>2</sup> of the 6th January and No. 39<sup>2</sup> of the 14th January have also shown that the Brüning Government refused to be stampeded by the extremist agitation into attempting to exploit this question in order to raise the question of the eastern frontiers or otherwise to steal Nazi thunder.

15. Meanwhile, the idea of a general economic conference has not yet come to the front. The United States Ambassador dined with me last night and I mentioned to him that we had heard that the German Government had been sounding his Government as to the possibility of the convocation of an international economic conference in order to devise a cure for the world economic crisis. I asked Mr. Sackett whether he could tell me, in confidence, what response, if any, the German Government had received at Washington in reply to their enquiries. Mr. Sackett said that, with a view to helping the Brüning Government, he had suggested to them the convocation of such a conference. At their request he had sounded President Hoover on the subject, but he had met with no response. The fact was that President Hoover was so occupied with internal questions that he had no time to spare for the consideration of such suggestions as the convocation of an international

<sup>1</sup> No. 340.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed.

economic conference, which, moreover, as Mr. Sackett spontaneously remarked, would naturally have to consider such questions as inter-Allied debts, reparations and the movement of gold. He had written several letters to President Hoover, but had merely received acknowledgments of his communications.

16. In the above connexion, I may add that I have not heard any reference in any conversation which I have recently had with prominent Germans to the idea of an economic conference, nor have I noticed any references to the subject in the press. The Germans seem rather to hope that a large international credit operation may be carried through, from which they might be able to benefit to a large extent.

17. Mr. Sackett, in the course of some general remarks on the position of the Brüning Government, said that it would be of great value and use if His Majesty's Government could do something to enhance the prestige of the Chancellor. A gesture on the part of England would do more for the Brüning Government than anything else. He admitted that he did not quite see what form such a gesture could take, but he was emphatic about its desirability and about the good results which it would have for the Brüning Government. By a curious coincidence the Danish Minister, who has been here for a good many years, expressed much the same view to me two nights ago. England and France should, he said, do something to help the Brüning Government. The inference I draw from the foregoing is that, in the opinion of competent observers, it is not only a German but also a European interest that the Brüning Government should remain in power and have their hands strengthened internationally.

18. The appreciation of the situation contained in the foregoing paragraphs is little more than a summary of the views I have from time to time expressed in my despatches of the last few months. I have, however, thought it worth while to restate these views, in order to put before you the grounds for my attitude towards the questions raised in your despatch. At the present moment there is no more reason to fear either the downfall of the Brüning Government or a serious and sudden increase of economic distress in Germany than there has been at any time since the election in September. On the contrary, the general outlook at the moment is undoubtedly brighter than it has been since that event. Nevertheless, there are elements of uncertainty present to a disquieting extent, and I am entirely in agreement with the opening paragraph of your despatch, in which you say that you are not satisfied that the situation in Germany can as yet be regarded with equanimity, and also with the view that the policy of His Majesty's Government should be to lend such support as may be feasible to the Government of Dr. Brüning. It is impossible to forecast whether such support will ever in fact be needed, or what are the circumstances which might make it valuable, even invaluable. Nor is it easy to offer immediate suggestions as to the form which such support might take, other than appreciative references in public speeches to the progress achieved by Dr. Brüning and the courage he has shown in facing his problems. Apart from this, I am inclined to agree with

Dr. Kaas in his view (reported in my despatch No. 81<sup>1</sup> of the 29th January) that it is not so much actual concessions that are needed as some tangible evidence, some indication of a readiness to consider the German point of view.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. This despatch reported a speech made by Mgr Kaas at Treves on January 28, 1930.

### No. 354

*Letter from Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson*

[C 1705/11/18]

BERLIN, March 6, 1931

I am writing to you privately with reference to my despatch No. 158<sup>1</sup> of March 4th in which I do my best to reply to your despatch No. 165<sup>2</sup> of the 19th ultimo. In that despatch you ask for my views about the position of the Brüning Government, the possibility or otherwise of its collapse and the reaction of such a collapse on the internal structure of Germany, as well as on her international relationships. You require a general appreciation of the present position in Germany in order to enable you to decide whether or not His Majesty's Government would do well to shape their course on the assumption that a collapse having serious international repercussions may be reasonably expected in the present circumstances. You also say that if there is a real danger of the Brüning Government not being able to weather the storm, it ought to be the policy of His Majesty's Government to give it such support and encouragement as they properly can in order to fortify its position. I trust that my reply will give you the information you want on the various points which you have raised.

It is difficult and often risky to attempt a forecast of the future course of events, but we believe here that there is little likelihood of the collapse of the Brüning Government as far as we can judge at present. Brüning has great prestige in Germany. He is backed by the President and can rely on the support of Dr. Braun, Prime Minister of Prussia and one of the most powerful men in Germany. The two immediate difficulties before the Brüning Government are to get the Reichstag as composed at present, *i.e.* without the Right, to swallow their agrarian proposals and to pass the estimates of the Ministry of Defence, which include a vote on account for pocket battleship 'B'. I believe that they will surmount these difficulties. The Reichstag will then be adjourned and, so far as we know, not meet again until the autumn. Brüning will then have a clear run of some six months. The important point is that unemployment should decrease to such an extent between now and next autumn as no longer to be a menacing factor in the political and industrial situation. For if the figures of unemployment do not appreciably fall, the next winter will be very serious indeed and anything might happen.

<sup>1</sup> No. 353.

<sup>2</sup> No. 350.

But whilst, in our view, the Brüning Government does not appear to be in any immediate danger, I have felt for some time, and this opinion has been spontaneously expressed to me by two prominent colleagues, including the United States Ambassador, that some friendly gesture on the part of His Majesty's Government towards the Brüning Government or the Chancellor himself would be very helpful, and as you have yourself indicated the possibility of giving the Brüning Government support and encouragement if circumstances rendered it necessary, I venture to put the following suggestion to you.

Your recent successful visits to Paris and Rome, on which I hope you will allow me to congratulate you, have brought three great Powers of Europe into line in connection with the naval pact and have also produced a good atmosphere as between France and Italy. The statement which you made in connection with the naval pact on returning to England has put an end to the calculated suspicion in certain quarters here that that pact must have been achieved at the cost of Germany. This is further proved by the speech made by Dr. Curtius during his recent visit to Vienna when he said 'I had an opportunity of speaking to the British Foreign Secretary about this matter, and I can confidently say that the Franco-Italian naval agreement was not reached at the expense of disarmament on land . . . This agreement between Rome and Paris will facilitate substantially the labours of the international Disarmament Conference'.

There is thus solidarity between England, France and Italy as regards naval disarmament. The fourth great Power in Europe, Germany (for I do not take Russia into account for the purpose of this letter), which is vitally interested in disarmament, appears in a somewhat solitary light owing, of course, to the fact that she is neither a naval nor a military Power. Could you not, so to speak, bring her out of the cold and rope her in by suggesting that Brüning might visit England privately some time after Easter ostensibly for an exchange of views about the forthcoming disarmament conference? This would be in line with what Curtius said to me in a recent conversation I had with him on the subject of disarmament, in which he expressed the view (please see paragraph 8 of my despatch No. 133<sup>1</sup> of February 24th) that 'the great Powers, *i.e.* Germany, France, England and Italy, should get together and decide on the line of action to be followed at the Disarmament Conference'. I repeat again that Brüning's prestige is great in Germany, and the way in which he has faced up to his country's difficulties has, I think, impressed public opinion in other countries, but he does not, like Curtius, know any of the leading statesmen of Europe, and a visit to England would, I think, give him an international prestige which would be helpful to him in Germany itself. I cannot imagine anything which would more impress and please the Germans than if he were to spend a week-end at Chequers, for instance. Once the Reichstag was up and Easter over I should think that he would be able to get away for two or three days.

The foregoing suggestion may not commend itself to you and you may see .

<sup>1</sup> No. 351.

considerable difficulties, nor can I say whether it would commend itself to the Chancellor himself, though I think that such an invitation would please him. In any event I do feel that if you or the Prime Minister could take some opportunity of publicly testifying to the statesmanlike and energetic manner with which Brüning is grappling with difficulties which are common to practically all the great countries of the world at the present moment, an excellent impression would be produced here and his hands would be strengthened.

HORACE RUMBOLD

No. 355

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received March 25)*

*No. 194 [C 1907/11/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, March 18, 1931

I have the honour to report that Dr. Curtius asked me to go and see him to-day. He said that he wished to speak to me about two questions, namely, the conversation which we had had about the German attitude towards disarmament, as recorded in my despatch No. 133<sup>1</sup> of the 24th February, and the telegram which he had received from Baron Neurath<sup>2</sup> transmitting the suggestion that the Chancellor and he, Dr. Curtius, should pay a visit to London. I am dealing with the first of these questions in my immediately following despatch.

2. Dr. Curtius began by saying that the state of affairs in the Reichstag made it impossible for him to attend the meeting of the Pan-Europa Organisation Committee in Paris on the 24th March (see my despatch No. 187<sup>3</sup> of the 13th instant). The Government were having difficulties with the Social Democrats in connexion with the latter's demand for an increase in the income tax on incomes over £1,000 a year and for the increased taxation of directors' fees. He might have difficulties with his own party, *i.e.*, the People's party, and the parliamentary situation, generally speaking, made it impossible for him to leave Berlin. He would thus not have an opportunity of seeing you on the occasion of the meeting in Paris.

3. Dr. Curtius then read out to me the telegram which he had received two days ago from Baron Neurath recording your conversation with the latter. In this conversation you had given Baron Neurath the assurance, which you had already given to Herr von Schubert, that, during your discussions<sup>4</sup> in Paris and Rome, you had not touched on the question of land disarmament. You had then suggested that the Chancellor and Dr. Curtius might pay a visit to England before the next meeting of the Council. Dr.

<sup>1</sup> No. 351.

<sup>2</sup> Baron von Neurath succeeded Dr. Sthamer as German Ambassador in London on November 3, 1930.

<sup>3</sup> Not printed.

<sup>4</sup> *i.e.* in connexion with the Franco-Italian naval negotiations.

Curtius said that both he and the Chancellor would be very willing to pay a visit to England, but the difficulty was the date. He informed me that after the adjournment of the Reichstag on the 28th instant both he and the Chancellor intended to take a holiday of some three weeks, as they were in much need of a rest. This would mean that they would not be back in Berlin until about the 20th April. A report had reached the German Government that the French Minister for Foreign Affairs might propose that the League Council, instead of meeting, as it would normally do, on the second Monday in May, *i.e.*, the 11th May, should meet on the 4th May, in order that its meeting should not clash with the date of the election of the French President. Dr. Curtius had heard that M. Briand had a good chance of being elected President, and he said that, if M. Briand were to ask that the meeting of the Council should be advanced by one week, he, for his part, could not refuse such a request. Dr. Curtius had asked the French Ambassador to ascertain whether the above-mentioned report was accurate. If the Council met on the 4th May it would mean that he would have to be in Geneva at the end of April in order to take part in the meeting of the Commission for European Union. Neither he nor the Chancellor would, in these circumstances, have enough time to pay a visit to England before the meeting of the Council.

4. But even if the Council met on the 11th May, he did not think that it would be possible for the German Ministers to go to England before that date. He pointed out that both the Chancellor and himself would find considerable arrears of work when they returned to Berlin, and would, moreover, be occupied with the consideration of important matters of internal policy. A visit to England would necessarily take some four or five days, and he did not think that they could fit it in in the time at their disposal. There would be a further advantage in deferring the visit until after the meeting of the Council, because he could discuss with you at Geneva the details of the visit, such as the persons who might usefully accompany the German Ministers as well as the intended scope of the discussions with yourself and members of His Majesty's Government. Although Dr. Curtius read to me the telegram which he was sending to Baron Neurath accepting in principle your suggestion that he and the Chancellor should pay a visit to England, but explaining why it might not be possible for them to go on the date suggested, *i.e.*, at the beginning of May, he asked me to give you these further detailed explanations.

5. I should add that Baron Neurath's telegram contained a phrase to the effect that it was not your intention to constitute a *bloc* of the three Western Powers. I took this phrase up, and said that the idea underlying the expression was, no doubt, that you wished to avoid any appearance of leaving Germany out in the cold. Dr. Curtius said that he had fully appreciated this and had so interpreted your suggestion of a visit of the German Ministers to England.

6. Two points emerged from this conversation: Firstly, that the German Ministers are sincerely gratified by the suggestion that they should visit

England; and, secondly, that they will be prepared for the discussion of questions which, whilst of general, are also of particular, interest to Germany.

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

No. 356

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received March 25)*

*No. 195 [C 1908/136/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, March 18, 1931

In my despatch No. 133 of the 24th ultimo, I reported Dr. Curtius's statement that he had been turning over in his mind the expediency of a consultation with the Chancellor and his relevant colleagues and officials in order to decide the line to be followed by Germany in view of the forthcoming Disarmament Conference. He had added that he would ask me to come and see him again after he had gone into the disarmament question with the Chancellor and the relevant Ministers.

2. Dr. Curtius informed me to-day that he had had the consultation which he had foreshadowed. The Chancellor had approved what he, Dr. Curtius, had said to me on the occasion of our interview as recorded in the above-mentioned despatch. He would now wish to supplement his remarks on that occasion, and he read to me some notes which he had prepared as a result of the exchange of views with his relevant colleagues. He prefaced the reading of these notes by saying that he was speaking in the same friendly and unofficial spirit in which I had spoken to him on the 24th February.

3. He said that the German delegation had worked for five years at Geneva with Lord Cecil in the hope of bringing about a real measure of disarmament. The German hopes had been disappointed. Germany did not approach the disarmament question as a complainant, but rather as a creditor. The recent speech<sup>1</sup> of the French War Minister, M. Maginot, had unfortunately poisoned the atmosphere at a moment when that atmosphere was getting better. Germany could not accept the thesis that, for purposes of disarmament, European States were to be permanently placed in two categories, *i.e.*, victors and vanquished, especially if in the case of Germany the basis of such discrimination were to be the alleged responsibility of Germany for the war. In this connexion, in referring to Germany, Dr. Curtius used the expression 'declassiert,' which may be rendered as 'kept in a lower category' (in the matter of armaments). If the States which had been victorious in the world war meant to enter the Disarmament Conference with the above-mentioned idea

<sup>1</sup> In this speech to the French Chamber during the debate on the army estimates (February 24-6) M. Maginot said that 'if it is desired to limit the risks of war, it is necessary, as it is equitable, as a guarantee for the other nations, that the countries which were the aggressors submit to limitations of armaments more severe than the nations which committed no aggression and which refuse to commit one. There can then be no question of going back on the military clauses of the Treaty of Versailles.'



of discrimination at the back of their mind, and if the only basis for discussion at the conference was to be the draft convention elaborated by the Preparatory Disarmament Commission, Germany would have no interest in attending this conference. I said that this was a serious statement to make, and asked him to read to me over again that portion of his notes which contained the statement, in case I had misapprehended what he had said.

4. Dr. Curtius then went on to elaborate what he had just read to me from notes which he again emphasised were entirely unofficial. He said that he had been urged to make some reply to M. Maginot's speech, but he had refused to do so. At this point I interjected that General Groener had replied to this speech (please see my despatch No. 174<sup>1</sup> of the 10th instant). Dr. Curtius said that General Groener's speech was not only meant for foreign consumption, but represented his genuine convictions. He had discussed the French land armaments with General Groener and the latter was of the firm opinion that the French army was stronger than ever and that, whilst this strength might not be due to 'Aufrüstung' (increased armaments), it was, anyhow, due to 'Umrüstung'—a word which the Minister of Defence had coined and for which there is no English equivalent, but which, I think, can be roughly translated as 'completely reorganised.' The draft convention elaborated by the Preparatory Disarmament Commission was unacceptable from the German standpoint, because it afforded the possibility of concealing the real state of a country's armaments, if not of increasing them.

5. I referred at this point to an article which Lord Cecil had recently contributed to the 'Neue Züricher Zeitung,' in which I understand that he had expressed the hope that the General Disarmament Conference might bring about a reduction of 25 per cent. in land armaments. Dr. Curtius pointed out that if the French military estimates in 1931 amounted to 3 milliards of marks, *i.e.*, £150 millions sterling, France could afford to cut that amount down by 25 per cent. without materially affecting her armed strength. France had such large reserves of war material that a reduction of 25 per cent. in her estimates would still leave her with an overwhelming superiority in that particular. Dr. Curtius again made a reference to the question of trained reserves which must be taken into account. Finally, he said that he hoped that His Majesty's Government would be able to bring pressure to bear on the French Government to effect a real measure of disarmament. The failure of the General Disarmament Conference would, in his view, have incalculable consequences for the League.

6. If I correctly interpret German opinion in connexion with the disarmament question, it is as follows: The Germans have been greatly impressed by the initiative and energy shown by His Majesty's Government in promoting

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. General Groener, in a statement on March 9 to the Budget Committee of the Reichstag, claimed (i) that 'the Versailles thesis of Germany's sole responsibility' for the war had been refuted, (ii) that Germany had 'a right to demand that the inequality in armaments which has arisen as a result of Germany's advance contribution be made good by corresponding contributions on the part of the other Powers in accordance with the stipulations of the Treaty'.

and concluding the Naval Pact, and especially in bringing France and Italy into line in the face of what, at one time, seemed to be insuperable difficulties. German opinion now hopes that His Majesty's Government will show equal energy in the matter of land disarmament. The Germans recognise that His Majesty's Government have the cause of disarmament seriously at heart and that they are making every endeavour to further that cause. They also believe that France holds the key to the success of the General Disarmament Conference, since, if she accepts an effective scheme for armament reduction, her satellites will be obliged to follow suit. Pressure should, therefore, be brought to bear on France for that purpose.

7. In the above connexion I have noted with interest the opinion expressed by Lord Tyrrell in his letter to Mr. Sargent of the 11th instant, which was enclosed in your despatch No. 251<sup>1</sup> that 'if only the Germans would adopt a reasonable attitude and if they would let the revisionist campaign alone for the time being, the French would, at the Disarmament Conference, without raising German armaments, bring their own armaments down nearer to those of Germany. This is almost certainly what the French Government are trying to secure.'

I have, &c.

HORACE RUMBOLD

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

#### No. 357

*Lord Tyrrell (Paris) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received March 27)*

*No. 339 [C 2030/136/18]*

His Majesty's representative at Paris presents his compliments to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and has the honour to transmit to him copy of a letter from the Ambassadors' Conference to the League of Nations, dated the 16th March, respecting military control in Germany.

PARIS, *March 25th, 1931.*

ENCLOSURE IN No. 357

*President of the Ambassadors' Conference to the Secretary-General,*

M. le Secrétaire général,

PARIS, *le 16 mars, 1931*

Au nom des Gouvernements belge, britannique, français, italien et japonais, représentés à la Conférence des Ambassadeurs, j'ai l'honneur de vous faire savoir que les fonctions des experts militaires maintenus en Allemagne—dans les conditions précisées par ma lettre du 22 juillet 1927—auprès des missions diplomatiques qu'entretiennent à Berlin les Gouvernements susvisés, ont pris fin à la date du 31 janvier 1930.

J'ai l'honneur de vous faire tenir, en même temps que la présente lettre, le rapport (1) rédigé par ces experts comme suite au rapport de la Commission militaire interalliée de Contrôle qui vous a été transmis le 31 juillet 1927.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

Comme le précédent, ce rapport a été établi en suivant l'ordre des articles de la Partie V du Traité de Versailles. Il comprend sept fascicules, dont chacun constitue un supplément au fascicule correspondant du rapport de la Commission interalliée de Contrôle; chaque fascicule est accompagné d'annexes. Je joins à la présente lettre la liste de ces fascicules avec l'indication du nombre d'annexes correspondant (pièce No. 1.)<sup>(1)</sup>.

Au début du mois de janvier 1930, la totalité des questions qui avaient motivé le maintien à Berlin des experts n'était pas encore réglée. En vue de leur règlement, est intervenu le 10 janvier 1930, entre les Gouvernements représentés à la Conférence des Ambassadeurs et le Gouvernement allemand, un accord dont le texte est également ci-joint (pièce No. 2<sup>(1)</sup>). La pièce No. 3<sup>(1)</sup> fait ressortir les résultats obtenus postérieurement au 31 janvier 1930 jusqu'au 28 février 1931, et les modifications à apporter, en conséquence, aux textes des fascicules correspondants du rapport des experts; elle indique, d'autre part, les lacunes existant encore à cette dernière date, ainsi que les questions pour lesquelles ont été prévus des délais d'exécution dont certains s'échelonnent jusqu'au 1<sup>er</sup> juillet 1933.

La documentation constituée par le rapport de la Commission militaire interalliée de Contrôle, le rapport des experts et la pièce No. 3<sup>(1)</sup> ci-dessus visée, sous réserve des compléments qu'elle prévoit, doivent être considérés comme contenant l'ensemble des dispositions auxquelles l'Allemagne s'est engagée à se conformer pour que soit assurée l'exécution des clauses militaires de la Partie V du Traité de Versailles.

De l'application pratique desdites dispositions dépend donc la fidèle observation des clauses dont il s'agit.

La surveillance de cette application a été officiellement exercée, jusqu'au 31 janvier 1927, par la Commission interalliée de Contrôle; mais, après cette date, la responsabilité n'en incombait ni aux experts maintenus à Berlin sans aucun pouvoir de contrôle, ni à la Conférence des Ambassadeurs, respectueuse des dispositions du traité.

La conférence n'est donc pas qualifiée pour formuler une appréciation d'ensemble sur l'observation de celles des clauses militaires dont les conditions d'application étaient considérées comme réglées lors du retrait de la Commission interalliée de Contrôle. De même, la conférence n'a pas, en raison de ses attributions, à formuler d'appréciation d'ensemble sur l'accroissement des budgets militaires du Reich, la question des dépenses militaires n'étant pas mentionnée directement dans le traité. Par contre, certains points particuliers, qui restaient à régler lors du retrait de la Commission interalliée de Contrôle, appellent d'importantes constatations qu'il a paru nécessaire de résumer dans une note complémentaire spéciale (pièce No. 4<sup>(1)</sup>). Ces constatations, sur lesquelles la conférence a l'honneur d'attirer particulièrement l'attention du Conseil de la Société des Nations, portent notamment sur les articles 160 (effectifs et recrutement), 162 (police), 177 (activité des associations), 178 (établissements militaires); elles ne permettent pas de considérer les résultats obtenus sur tous ces points comme satisfaisants.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

Il appartiendra éventuellement au Conseil de tirer des faits ainsi rapportés les conclusions qu'il estimerait opportunes.

Veillez, &c.

A. BRIAND

No. 358

*Sir H. Rumbold (Berlin) to Mr. A. Henderson (Received March 18)*

*No. 183 [1745/520/3]*

Sir,

BERLIN, *March 13, 1931*

I asked Herr von Bülow to-day whether he could give me any information about Dr. Curtius' recent visit to Vienna. I may add that I had met Dr. Curtius at dinner last night and had mentioned the visit to him, but had had no opportunity of having a discussion on the subject with him.

2. Herr von Bülow said that Dr. Curtius had discussed three matters with the Austrian Government:—firstly the world-wide economic crisis in general and its relation to Austria and Germany in particular, secondly, the scheme for granting preferential tariffs to agricultural produce from Rumania and Yugoslavia, and, thirdly, the possibility of the creation of a sort of customs union between Austria and Germany.

3. As regards the second of these three points the difficulty lay in the existence of most-favoured-nation clauses in the various treaties which Austria and Germany respectively had with other countries. Herr von Bülow expressed the views, in confidence, that the Rumanian jurists were of poor quality. If the Rumanian Government wanted to get preferential duties for the agricultural produce of Rumania, it was up to them to devise some scheme for getting over the difficulty of the most-favoured-nation clauses in German and Austrian commercial treaties.

4. As regards the third point the Secretary of State said that the expression 'customs union' did not mean a customs union in the sense of the old *Zollverein*. There would still be a customs barrier between the states included in such a customs union. I enquired whether the idea was that States concluding such a customs union would treat produce or commodities coming from other countries outside the customs union in an exactly similar way, whilst maintaining duties as between themselves. Herr von Bülow said that that was an accurate description of the idea underlying the proposed arrangements. Of course, it might be possible to lower the customs duties as between countries entering a customs union and such a union need not by any means be restricted to Germany and Austria, but might include other countries as well.

5. The great point was to set the ball rolling and to revive trade. Nothing had been done in this direction at the recent meeting of the Commission of Enquiry for European Union, and the German Government felt that it was high time to take whatever steps were possible to emerge from the present world economic crisis.

6. In conversation with me Dr. Curtius expressed himself as very pleased with his reception at Vienna and with the atmosphere of friendliness which he had found there.

7. I am sending a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's Minister at Vienna.<sup>1</sup>

I have, etc.

HORACE RUMBOLD

<sup>1</sup> The official announcement of the proposed Austro-German Customs Union was made to His Majesty's Government by the Austrian Minister on March 21. The correspondence dealing with the attitude of His Majesty's Government towards the proposal is included in Volume II of this series.

## APPENDIX I

*The London Naval Treaty, April 22, 1930*

### INTERNATIONAL TREATY FOR THE LIMITATION AND REDUCTION OF NAVAL ARMAMENT

LONDON, *April 22, 1930*

The President of the United States of America, the President of the French Republic, His Majesty the King of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, His Majesty the King of Italy, and His Majesty the Emperor of Japan,

Desiring to prevent the dangers and reduce the burdens inherent in competitive armaments, and

Desiring to carry forward the work begun by the Washington Naval Conference and to facilitate the progressive realization of general limitation and reduction of armaments,

Have resolved to conclude a Treaty for the limitation and reduction of naval armament, and have accordingly appointed as their Plenipotentiaries:

[Here follows a list of Plenipotentiaries.]

Who, having communicated to one another their full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed as follows:

#### PART I

##### ARTICLE I

The High Contracting Parties agree not to exercise their rights to lay down the keels of capital ship replacement tonnage during the years 1931-1936 inclusive as provided in Chapter II, Part 3 of the Treaty for the Limitation of Naval Armament signed between them at Washington on the 6th February, 1922, and referred to in the present Treaty as the Washington Treaty.

This provision is without prejudice to the disposition relating to the replacement of ships accidentally lost or destroyed contained in Chapter II, Part 3, Section I, paragraph (c) of the said Treaty.

France and Italy may, however, build the replacement tonnage which they were entitled to lay down in 1927 and 1929 in accordance with the provisions of the said Treaty.

##### ARTICLE 2

1. The United States, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Japan shall dispose of the following capital ships as provided in this Article:

*United States:* 'Florida', 'Utah', 'Arkansas' or 'Wyoming'.

*United Kingdom:* 'Benbow', 'Iron Duke', 'Marlborough', 'Emperor of India', 'Tiger'.

*Japan:* 'Hiyei'.

(a) Subject to the provisions of sub-paragraph (b), the above ships, unless converted to target use exclusively in accordance with Chapter II, Part 2,

paragraph II (c) of the Washington Treaty, shall be scrapped in the following manner:

One of the ships to be scrapped by the United States, and two of those to be scrapped by the United Kingdom shall be rendered unfit for warlike service, in accordance with Chapter II, Part 2, paragraph III (b) of the Washington Treaty, within twelve months from the coming into force of the present Treaty. These ships shall be finally scrapped, in accordance with paragraph II (a) or (b) of the said Part 2, within twenty-four months from the said coming into force. In the case of the second of the ships to be scrapped by the United States, and of the third and fourth of the ships to be scrapped by the United Kingdom, the said periods shall be eighteen and thirty months respectively from the coming into force of the present Treaty.

(b) Of the ships to be disposed of under this Article, the following may be retained for training purposes:

by the United States: 'Arkansas' or 'Wyoming'.

by the United Kingdom: 'Iron Duke'.

by Japan: 'Hiyei'.

These ships shall be reduced to the condition prescribed in Section V of Annex II to Part II of the present Treaty. The work of reducing these vessels to the required condition shall begin, in the case of the United States and the United Kingdom, within twelve months, and in the case of Japan within eighteen months from the coming into force of the present Treaty; the work shall be completed within six months of the expiration of the above-mentioned periods.

Any of these ships which are not retained for training purposes shall be rendered unfit for warlike service within eighteen months, and finally scrapped within thirty months, of the coming into force of the present Treaty.

2. Subject to any disposal of capital ships which might be necessitated, in accordance with the Washington Treaty, by the building by France or Italy of the replacement tonnage referred to in Article 1 of the present Treaty, all existing capital ships mentioned in Chapter II, Part 3, Section II of the Washington Treaty and not designated above to be disposed of may be retained during the term of the present Treaty.

3. The right of replacement is not lost by delay in laying down replacement tonnage, and the old vessel may be retained until replaced even though due for scrapping under Chapter II, Part 3, Section II of the Washington Treaty.

### ARTICLE 3

1. For the purposes of the Washington Treaty, the definition of an aircraft carrier given in Chapter II, Part 4 of the said Treaty is hereby replaced by the following definition:

The expression 'aircraft carrier' includes any surface vessel of war, whatever its displacement, designed for the specific and exclusive purpose of carrying aircraft and so constructed that aircraft can be launched therefrom and landed thereon.

2. The fitting of a landing-on or flying-off platform or deck on a capital ship, cruiser or destroyer, provided such vessel was not designed or adapted exclusively as an aircraft carrier, shall not cause any vessel so fitted to be charged against or classified in the category of aircraft carriers.

3. No capital ship in existence on the 1st April, 1930, shall be fitted with a landing-on platform or deck.

#### ARTICLE 4

1. No aircraft carrier of 10,000 tons (10,160 metric tons) or less standard displacement mounting a gun above 6·1-inch (155 mm.) calibre shall be acquired by or constructed by or for any of the High Contracting Parties.

2. As from the coming into force of the present Treaty in respect of all the High Contracting Parties, no aircraft carrier of 10,000 tons (10,160 metric tons) or less standard displacement mounting a gun above 6·1-inch (155 mm.) calibre shall be constructed within the jurisdiction of any of the High Contracting Parties.

#### ARTICLE 5

An aircraft carrier must not be designed and constructed for carrying a more powerful armament than that authorised by Article IX or Article X of the Washington Treaty, or by Article 4 of the present Treaty, as the case may be.

Wherever in the said Articles IX and X the calibre of 6 inches (152 mm.) is mentioned, the calibre of 6·1 inches (155 mm.) is substituted therefor.

### PART II

#### ARTICLE 6

1. The rules for determining standard displacement prescribed in Chapter II, Part 4 of the Washington Treaty shall apply to all surface vessels of war of each of the High Contracting Parties.

2. The standard displacement of a submarine is the surface displacement of the vessel complete (exclusive of the water in non-watertight structure) fully manned, engined, and equipped ready for sea, including all armament and ammunition, equipment, outfit, provisions for crew, miscellaneous stores, and implements of every description that are intended to be carried in war, but without fuel, lubricating oil, fresh water or ballast water of any kind on board.

3. Each naval combatant vessel shall be rated at its displacement tonnage when in the standard condition. The word 'ton', except in the expression 'metric tons', shall be understood to be the ton of 2,240 pounds (1,016 kilos.).

#### ARTICLE 7

1. No submarine the standard displacement of which exceeds 2,000 tons (2,032 metric tons) or with a gun above 5·1-inch (130 mm.) calibre shall be acquired by or constructed by or for any of the High Contracting Parties.

2. Each of the High Contracting Parties may, however, retain, build or acquire a maximum number of three submarines of a standard displacement not exceeding 2,800 tons (2,845 metric tons); these submarines may carry guns not above 6·1-inch (155 mm.) calibre. Within this number, France may retain one unit, already launched, of 2,880 tons (2,926 metric tons), with guns the calibre of which is 8 inches (203 mm.).

3. The High Contracting Parties may retain the submarines which they possessed on the 1st April, 1930, having a standard displacement not in excess of 2,000 tons (2,032 metric tons) and armed with guns above 5·1-inch (130 mm.) calibre.

4. As from the coming into force of the present Treaty in respect of all the High Contracting Parties, no submarine the standard displacement of which exceeds 2,000 tons (2,032 metric tons) or with a gun above 5·1-inch (130 mm.) calibre shall be constructed within the jurisdiction of any of the High Contracting Parties, except as provided in paragraph 2 of this Article.



## ARTICLE 8

Subject to any special agreements which may submit them to limitation, the following vessels are exempt from limitation:

(a) naval surface combatant vessels of 600 tons (610 metric tons) standard displacement and under;

(b) naval surface combatant vessels exceeding 600 tons (610 metric tons), but not exceeding 2,000 tons (2,032 metric tons) standard displacement, provided they have none of the following characteristics:

- (1) mount a gun above 6·1-inch (155 mm.) calibre;
- (2) mount more than four guns above 3-inch (76 mm.) calibre;
- (3) are designed or fitted to launch torpedoes;
- (4) are designed for a speed greater than twenty knots.

(c) naval surface vessels not specifically built as fighting ships which are employed on fleet duties or as troop transports or in some other way than as fighting ships, provided they have none of the following characteristics:

- (1) mount a gun above 6·1-inch (155 mm.) calibre;
- (2) mount more than four guns above 3-inch (76 mm.) calibre;
- (3) are designed or fitted to launch torpedoes;
- (4) are designed for a speed greater than twenty knots;
- (5) are protected by armour plate;
- (6) are designed or fitted to launch mines;
- (7) are fitted to receive aircraft on board from the air;
- (8) mount more than one aircraft-launching apparatus on the centre line; or two, one on each broadside;
- (9) if fitted with any means of launching aircraft into the air, are designed or adapted to operate at sea more than three aircraft.

## ARTICLE 9

The rules as to replacement contained in Annex I to this Part II are applicable to vessels of war not exceeding 10,000 tons (10,160 metric tons) standard displacement, with the exception of aircraft carriers, whose replacement is governed by the provisions of the Washington Treaty.

## ARTICLE 10

Within one month after the date of laying down and the date of completion respectively of each vessel of war, other than capital ships, aircraft carriers and the vessels exempt from limitation under Article 8, laid down or completed by or for them after the coming into force of the present Treaty, the High Contracting Parties shall communicate to each of the other High Contracting Parties the information detailed below:

(a) the date of laying the keel and the following particulars:

classification of the vessel;

standard displacement in tons and metric tons;

principal dimensions, namely: length at water-line, extreme beam at or below water-line;

mean draft at standard displacement;

calibre of the largest gun.

(b) the date of completion together with the foregoing particulars relating to the vessel at that date.

The information to be given in the case of capital ships and aircraft carriers is governed by the Washington Treaty.

#### ARTICLE 11

Subject to the provisions of Article 2 of the present Treaty, the rules for disposal contained in Annex II to this Part II shall be applied to all vessels of war to be disposed of under the said Treaty, and to aircraft carriers as defined in Article 3.

#### ARTICLE 12

1. Subject to any supplementary agreements which may modify, as between the High Contracting Parties concerned, the lists in Annex III to this Part II, the special vessels shown therein may be retained and their tonnage shall not be included in the tonnage subject to limitation.

2. Any other vessel constructed, adapted or acquired to serve the purposes for which these special vessels are retained shall be charged against the tonnage of the appropriate combatant category, according to the characteristics of the vessel, unless such vessel conforms to the characteristics of vessels exempt from limitation under Article 8.

3. Japan may, however, replace the minelayers 'Aso' and 'Tokiwa' by two new minelayers before the 31st December, 1936. The standard displacement of each of the new vessels shall not exceed 5,000 tons (5,080 metric tons); their speed shall not exceed twenty knots, and their other characteristics shall conform to the provisions of paragraph (b) of Article 8. The new vessels shall be regarded as special vessels and their tonnage shall not be chargeable to the tonnage of any combatant category. The 'Aso' and 'Tokiwa' shall be disposed of in accordance with Section I or II of Annex II to this Part II, on completion of the replacement vessels.

4. The 'Asama', 'Yakumo', 'Izumo', 'Iwate' and 'Kasuga' shall be disposed of in accordance with Section I or II of Annex II to this Part II when the first three vessels of the 'Kuma' class have been replaced by new vessels. These three vessels of the 'Kuma' class shall be reduced to the condition prescribed in Section V, sub-paragraph (b) 2 of Annex II to this Part II, and are to be used for training ships, and their tonnage shall not thereafter be included in the tonnage subject to limitation.

#### ARTICLE 13

Existing ships of various types, which, prior to the 1st April, 1930, have been used as stationary training establishments or hulks, may be retained in a non-seagoing condition.<sup>1</sup>

#### PART III

The President of the United States of America, His Majesty The King of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, and His Majesty the Emperor of Japan, have agreed as between themselves to the provisions of this Part III:

#### ARTICLE 14

The naval combatant vessels of the United States, the British Commonwealth of Nations and Japan, other than capital ships, aircraft carriers and all vessels

<sup>1</sup> Part II of the treaty included four annexes not reprinted here. These annexes laid down rules for the replacement and disposal, by scrapping or other means, of ships of war, and contained a list of 'special vessels' to be retained by each of the Signatory Powers.

exempt from limitation under Article 8, shall be limited during the term of the present Treaty as provided in this Part III, and, in the case of special vessels, as provided in Article 12.

#### ARTICLE 15

For the purpose of this Part III the definition of the cruiser and destroyer categories shall be as follows:

##### *Cruisers.*

Surface vessels of war, other than capital ships or aircraft carriers, the standard displacement of which exceeds 1,850 tons (1,880 metric tons), or with a gun above 5.1-inch (130 mm.) calibre.

The cruiser category is divided into two sub-categories, as follows:

- (a) cruisers carrying a gun above 6.1-inch (155 mm.) calibre;
- (b) cruisers carrying a gun not above 6.1 inch (155 mm.) calibre.

##### *Destroyers.*

Surface vessels of war the standard displacement of which does not exceed 1,850 tons (1,880 metric tons), and with a gun not above 5.1-inch (130 mm.) calibre.

#### ARTICLE 16

1. The completed tonnage in the cruiser, destroyer and submarine categories which is not to be exceeded on the 31st December, 1936, is given in the following table:

<i>Categories</i>	<i>United States</i>	<i>British Commonwealth of Nations</i>	<i>Japan</i>
Cruisers:			
(a) with guns of more than 6.1-inch (155 mm.) calibre	180,000 tons (182,880 metric tons)	146,800 tons (149,149 metric tons)	108,400 tons (110,134 metric tons)
(b) with guns of 6.1-inch (155 mm.) calibre or less	143,500 tons (145,796 metric tons)	192,200 tons (195,275 metric tons)	100,450 tons (102,057 metric tons)
Destroyers . . . . .	150,000 tons (152,400 metric tons)	150,000 tons (152,400 metric tons)	105,500 tons (107,188 metric tons)
Submarines . . . . .	52,700 tons (53,543 metric tons)	52,700 tons (53,513 metric tons)	52,700 tons (53,543 metric tons)

2. Vessels which cause the total tonnage in any category to exceed the figures given in the foregoing table shall be disposed of gradually during the period ending on the 31st December, 1936.

3. The maximum number of cruisers of sub-category (a) shall be as follows: for the United States, eighteen; for the British Commonwealth of Nations, fifteen; for Japan, twelve.

4. In the destroyer category not more than sixteen per cent. of the allowed total tonnage shall be employed in vessels of over 1,500 tons (1,524 metric tons) standard

displacement. Destroyers completed or under construction on the 1st April, 1930, in excess of this percentage may be retained, but no other destroyers exceeding 1,500 tons (1,524 metric tons) standard displacement shall be constructed or acquired until a reduction to such sixteen per cent. has been effected.

5. Not more than twenty-five per cent. of the allowed total tonnage in the cruiser category may be fitted with a landing-on platform or deck for aircraft.

6. It is understood that the submarines referred to in paragraphs 2 and 3 of Article 7 will be counted as part of the total submarine tonnage of the High Contracting Party concerned.

7. The tonnage of any vessels retained under Article 13 or disposed of in accordance with Annex II to Part II of the present Treaty shall not be included in the tonnage subject to limitation.

#### ARTICLE 17

A transfer not exceeding ten per cent. of the allowed total tonnage of the category or sub-category into which the transfer is to be made shall be permitted between cruisers of sub-category (b) and destroyers.

#### ARTICLE 18

The United States contemplates the completion by 1935 of fifteen cruisers of sub-category (a) of an aggregate tonnage of 150,000 tons (152,400 metric tons). For each of the three remaining cruisers of sub-category (a) which it is entitled to construct the United States may elect to substitute 15,166 tons (15,409 metric tons) of cruisers of sub-category (b). In case the United States shall construct one or more of such three remaining cruisers of sub-category (a), the sixteenth unit will not be laid down before 1933 and will not be completed before 1936; the seventeenth will not be laid down before 1934 and will not be completed before 1937; the eighteenth will not be laid down before 1935 and will not be completed before 1938.

#### ARTICLE 19

Except as provided in Article 20, the tonnage laid down in any category subject to limitation in accordance with Article 16 shall not exceed the amount necessary to reach the maximum allowed tonnage of the category, or to replace vessels that become 'over-age' before the 31st December, 1936. Nevertheless, replacement tonnage may be laid down for cruisers and submarines that become 'over-age' in 1937, 1938 and 1939, and for destroyers that become 'over-age' in 1937 and 1938.

#### ARTICLE 20

Notwithstanding the rules for replacement contained in Annex I to Part II:

(a) The 'Frobisher' and 'Effingham' (United Kingdom) may be disposed of during the year 1936. Apart from the cruisers under construction on the 1st April, 1930, the total replacement tonnage of cruisers to be completed, in the case of the British Commonwealth of Nations, prior to the 31st December, 1936, shall not exceed 91,000 tons (92,456 metric tons).

(b) Japan may replace the 'Tama' by new construction to be completed during the year 1936.

(c) In addition to replacing destroyers becoming 'over-age' before the 31st December, 1936, Japan may lay down, in each of the years 1935 and 1936, not more than 5,200 tons (5,283 metric tons) to replace part of the vessels that become 'over-age' in 1938 and 1939.

(d) Japan may anticipate replacement during the term of the present Treaty by laying down not more than 19,200 tons (19,507 metric tons) of submarine tonnage, of which not more than 12,000 tons (12,192 metric tons) shall be completed by the 31st December, 1936.

#### ARTICLE 21

If, during the term of the present Treaty, the requirements of the national security of any High Contracting Party in respect of vessels of war limited by Part III of the present Treaty are in the opinion of that Party materially affected by new construction of any Power other than those who have joined in Part III of this Treaty, that High Contracting Party will notify the other Parties to Part III as to the increase required to be made in its own tonnages within one or more of the categories of such vessels of war, specifying particularly the proposed increases and the reasons therefor, and shall be entitled to make such increase. Thereupon the other Parties to Part III of this Treaty shall be entitled to make a proportionate increase in the category or categories specified; and the said other Parties shall promptly advise with each other through diplomatic channels as to the situation thus presented.

### PART IV

#### ARTICLE 22

The following are accepted as established rules of International Law:

(1) In their action with regard to merchant ships, submarines must conform to the rules of International Law to which surface vessels are subject.

(2) In particular, except in the case of persistent refusal to stop on being duly summoned, or of active resistance to visit or search, a warship, whether surface vessel or submarine, may not sink or render incapable of navigation a merchant vessel without having first placed passengers, crew and ship's papers in a place of safety. For this purpose the ship's boats are not regarded as a place of safety unless the safety of the passengers and crew is assured, in the existing sea and weather conditions, by the proximity of land, or the presence of another vessel which is in a position to take them on board.

The High Contracting Parties invite all other Powers to express their assent to the above rules.

### PART V

#### ARTICLE 23

The present Treaty shall remain in force until the 31st December, 1936, subject to the following exceptions:

(1) Part IV shall remain in force without limit of time;

(2) the provisions of Articles 3, 4 and 5, and of Article 11 and Annex II to Part II so far as they relate to aircraft carriers, shall remain in force for the same period as the Washington Treaty.

Unless the High Contracting Parties should agree otherwise by reason of a more general agreement limiting naval armaments, to which they all become parties, they shall meet in conference in 1935 to frame a new treaty to replace and to carry out the purposes of the present Treaty, it being understood that none of the provisions of the present Treaty shall prejudice the attitude of any of the High Contracting Parties at the conference agreed to.

#### ARTICLE 24

1. The present Treaty shall be ratified by the High Contracting Parties in accordance with their respective constitutional methods and the ratifications shall be deposited at London as soon as possible. Certified copies of all the *procès-verbaux* of the deposit of ratifications will be transmitted to the Governments of all the High Contracting Parties.

2. As soon as the ratifications of the United States of America, of His Majesty the King of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, in respect of each and all of the Members of the British Commonwealth of Nations as enumerated in the preamble of the present Treaty, and of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan have been deposited, the Treaty shall come into force in respect of the said High Contracting Parties.

3. On the date of the coming into force referred to in the preceding paragraph, Parts I, II, IV and V of the present Treaty will come into force in respect of the French Republic and the Kingdom of Italy if their ratifications have been deposited at that date; otherwise these Parts will come into force in respect of each of those Powers on the deposit of its ratification.

4. The rights and obligations resulting from Part III of the present Treaty are limited to the High Contracting Parties mentioned in paragraph 2 of this Article. The High Contracting Parties will agree as to the date on which, and the conditions under which, the obligations assumed under the said Part III by the High Contracting Parties mentioned in paragraph 2 of this Article will bind them in relation to France and Italy; such agreement will determine at the same time the corresponding obligations of France and Italy in relation to the other High Contracting Parties.

#### ARTICLE 25

After the deposit of the ratifications of all the High Contracting Parties, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland will communicate the provisions inserted in Part IV. of the present Treaty to all Powers which are not signatories of the said Treaty, inviting them to accede thereto definitely and without limit of time.

Such accession shall be effected by a declaration addressed to His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

#### ARTICLE 26

The present Treaty, of which the French and English texts are both authentic, shall remain deposited in the archives of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Duly certified copies thereof shall be transmitted to the Governments of all the High Contracting Parties.

In faith whereof the above-named Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Treaty and have affixed thereto their seals.

Done at London, the twenty-second day of April, nineteen hundred and thirty.  
[Here follow the signatures and seals of the Plenipotentiaries.]

## APPENDIX II

### THE MILITARY SITUATION IN GERMANY, JANUARY 1930

*Memorandum by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff*

[C 326/196/18: C.I.D. 979 B]

#### 1. *Introduction*

In December 1928 I gave an appreciation of the military situation in Germany; which was produced as C.I.D. Paper No. 926-B. The situation visualised then, and the conclusions arrived at, remain basically unchanged but during the past year additional information has been received from various sources which enables a fuller picture of German military tendencies to be drawn.

#### 2. *General Policy*

In the C.I.D. paper mentioned above, I drew attention to the fact that the German regular army was being trained as a cadre which would be expanded by the incorporation of the partially trained men of the patriotic associations and attention was drawn to certain public pronouncements made in June 1928 by General von Seeckt, the former Chef der Heeresleitung. In August 1929 Seeckt wrote a further article, the main thesis of which was that war of the future required for the first blow a 'highly mobile, highly organized, highly trained, well led and well armed professional army of limited numbers, whose striking power would not be retarded by the necessity of calling up reserves'. Behind this was to be 'an organized people to provide possible reinforcements and a defence force against possible invasion' with 'the material and industrial means of the nation organized in the most practical manner possible for the rapid delivery of munitions'. This is admittedly only the idea of an individual, but that individual was virtually the creator of the modern German army and is a possible candidate for the presidency of the German Republic in succession to Marshal von Hindenburg. From his budget speech on the 1929-30 Reichswehr Estimates, General Groener, the present Defence Minister, appeared also to support this idea.

It would seem probable, therefore, that the policy of training the German Army as a cadre is an interim policy for the period during which the German Army is restricted by the Treaty of Versailles, and that the tendency will be, if and when these restrictions are removed, towards the military organization visualised by Seeckt.

Meanwhile the German military leaders are doing all they can to increase the efficiency of the Reichswehr as an instrument for war, though by this it is not meant to imply that they are preparing for war. The measures adopted are in many cases in contravention both of the spirit and the letter of the Treaty of Versailles, but the nature of the information is such as to make it impossible for a charge to be made against Germany of breach of faith.

The following paragraphs deal with the more important tendencies on which reports have been received during the past year.

#### 3. *The Great General Staff*

By the Treaty of Versailles, the German Great General Staff was abolished and was not allowed to be re-created in any form. At the same time the Staff of the Reichswehrministerium was strictly limited to 300 officers or officials in the position of officers. The Reichswehrministerium telephone directory, however, shows

a branch called the 'Generalstab' which consists of four sections under a 'Chef des Generalstabes'. No mention of this is made in the German Army List, although all the other branches of the Staff, which appear in the telephone directory, are shown there. Information has also been received that a certain number of officers, shown in the Army List as serving with their units, are actually employed at the Reichswehrministerium, while a number of retired officers, who work in the various sections in civilian clothes, are really employed on General Staff work.

While none of this information is in itself absolutely conclusive, there would appear to be little doubt that at least the nucleus of the Great General Staff has been re-formed.

#### 4. *Recruiting and Reserves*

Conscription having been forbidden by the peace treaty, recruiting is now on a voluntary basis, and enlistment in the ranks must be for twelve years' consecutive service. No reserve formations are allowed.

After the war the German military authorities, contrary to these provisions, allowed a certain number of men, known as *Zeitfreiwillige*, to serve in the regular army for periods of from six months to a year, with the object of building up a reserve. It was not until 1925 that the Commission of Control put an end to this practice.

It appears that this idea is now being revived in the following various forms:—

1. Men are enlisted for twelve years, but are discharged on various grounds after three or more years' service.

2. A category of men is definitely being enlisted for three years only.

3. Men from the patriotic associations are being attached to regular units for short periods of training.

The British Military Attaché in Berlin estimated, from various items of evidence which have come to his knowledge, that in 1929 there were about 7,000 recruits in excess of the legal contingent undergoing training in the *depôts*.

#### 5. *Patriotic Associations*

At the same time the various patriotic associations are undoubtedly carrying on active military training. Not only the Nationalist associations, but also the republican 'Reichsbanner' have carried out exercises of a military nature. The following is an extract from a report by an individual who travelled through Eastern Germany by motor car in July 1929:—

'In a number of the small towns through which we passed on the Sunday, parades and drilling were taking place, in some cases by youths in Stahlhelm uniform, or simply in civilian clothes, and, less frequently, by older men in war-time uniforms. No less than 75 per cent. of these men were provided with rifles and bayonets, and in a number of cases the detachment was complete with machine-gun unit and what appeared to be a signalling section. Officers and non-commissioned officers differed in no way from those of the regular forces and appeared to have complete authority over the rank and file. . . . There was no attempt at secrecy.'

There is evidence to show that a certain amount of assistance in training is given to the patriotic associations by the regular army, though it is difficult to estimate to what extent this is being done; but in general it would appear that less reliance is being placed on them by the military authorities on account of their political activities. In the event of an emergency their value, from a military



point of view, would, however, be considerable, and recent reports from secret sources confirm the estimate given in C.I.D. Paper No. 926-B, that the nationalist and republican associations would be able to provide some 2,000,000 partially trained men.

The German Government have taken no practical steps to put into effect the Law of 1926 forbidding any military activities on the part of the patriotic associations. Recently the Prussian Minister of the Interior issued an order dissolving the Stahlhelm in the Rhineland Province and Westphalia, but it is considered that this was mainly a political move with the object of pacifying the French and ensuring that there was no delay in the evacuation of the Occupied Territory.

## 6. *Forbidden Weapons*

One of the chief handicaps under which the modern German Army suffers is the prohibition placed on certain weapons—in particular, heavy and medium artillery, infantry close support guns and armoured fighting vehicles.

As stated, however, in the C.I.D. Paper referred to above, there is evidence to show that experiments have been carried out both technically and tactically in these weapons. Training in medium artillery is believed to be carried out at Juterbog, while that in infantry close support guns and armoured fighting vehicles has been carried on at all manoeuvres and exercises by means of dummies. Recently the Germans have advanced a claim to the Conference of Ambassadors to the effect that they have a right to organize definite units armed with dummies of the forbidden weapons. This, however, is now being disputed. In addition to this there is evidence to show that exercises are carried out with tractors used as light tanks, and it would appear that the German military authorities are taking an active interest in the tractor industry in Germany with a view to providing a stop-gap tank in the event of an emergency. Little trustworthy information has been received as to the actual manufacture of tanks in Germany, but the British Military Attaché reported that, during a recent visit to Sweden, he obtained reliable information to the effect that [a Swedish firm] was constructing some 3-man armoured fighting vehicles to the order of the German Reichswehrministerium; and photographs have been received of an armoured motor-cycle combination fitted with a machine gun which was actually constructed in Germany.

A great deal of useful experimental and development work as regards armament design has undoubtedly been carried out during the past twelve months, particularly in infantry close support and anti-tank guns and in heavy machine guns. A close watch has also been kept on developments in other countries, partly through the agency of German experts employed at [a Swedish firm], and partly by the visits of German technical officers to the United States and to Chile.

## 7. *Illegal Manufacture of War Material*

The utilisation of foreign firms to evade the War Material Law can be taken as an accepted policy, though it is mainly employed for experiments in design. . . .<sup>1</sup> There is little doubt too that the manufacture of war material is also being carried on in Germany in factories other than those authorised by the Commission of Control. Information is difficult to obtain as such activities are naturally kept as secret as possible, but during the last year reports have been received on eight different factories, indicating that they have produced war

<sup>1</sup> The passage omitted gives some details of the manufacture of armaments for Germany by firms in Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Finland.

material of one kind or another, and it is safe to assume that others are engaged on the same work.

#### 8. *Mechanisation*

The military leaders of Germany have continually emphasised the necessity of increasing to the utmost the mobility of the Army, but the organization of mechanical transport units has been strictly limited by the peace treaty, which laid down a definite establishment for infantry and cavalry divisions.

To overcome this difficulty it appears that the Reichswehrministerium either owns, or has working agreements with, a number of civilian motor-transport firms throughout Germany. By this arrangement it can call on all the additional mechanical transport it requires both for peace purposes and on mobilisation. In addition a technical reserve of drivers and mechanics is being built up by the exchange of serving soldiers, who are attached to these firms for technical instruction, and employees of the firms, who do short service with regular units in order to receive the necessary military training.

It is also believed that secret experiments with light armoured fighting vehicles have been made, but so far the Reichswehrministerium has been able to evade detection in any open breach of the Treaty provisions. Trials with six-wheelers and other forms of artillery tractor are being continued, but in regard to mechanisation generally the policy of the Reichswehr is to watch the progress of development in other countries while fostering the home industry by means of secret subventions.

#### 9. *Chemical Warfare*

Germany is forbidden the use of 'asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases and all analogous liquids, materials or devices', but this has not prevented her from studying the question of chemical warfare. There is ample evidence to show that considerable experiments have been carried out in this respect, and that the German Army is trained in the use both of defensive and offensive gas. Our information provides sufficient evidence as to the degree of importance which is placed on this type of warfare by the German military authorities. The whole question from both aspects has been reviewed in the greatest detail, and elaborate calculations have been made, for example, as to the number and type of gas shell required for various kinds of gas bombardments.

In this connection there are two facts which are worthy of repetition: first that Germany is the largest manufacturer of chemicals in Europe, and secondly that the more general disarmament is carried out the greater will be the potential value of chemical warfare, as the chemical industry can be converted to war production more rapidly than any other.

#### 10. *Industrial Mobilization*

I referred in C.I.D. Paper No. 926-B to the study which is being made in Germany of the question of industrial mobilization, and the advantages conferred on her in this respect by the organization of her industry in general. The importance of this question was emphasised by General von Seeckt, in his recently published book 'The Future of the Reich' in which the following sentence occurs:—

'The material armament of a country consists nowadays not in the accumulation of stocks of arms, but in preparatory measures for their manufacture.' Efforts have, and are, being made to get an insight into the actual preparations being made in this respect, but owing to the secrecy which surrounds all schemes for mobilization it is difficult to get definite information. Sufficient has, however,

been received to show that the Reichsverband der Deutschen Industrie is collating information as to the maximum output from factories of certain types of war material, armoured plate for example, and the possibilities of expansion of such factories as would, in the event of war, be required to be converted to the production of war material.

A study has recently been made of the German budget in general, and it is interesting to note that important subsidies are being paid to armament manufacturing firms in addition to the very considerable sums shown in the Reichsheer estimates as expended on the maintenance of arms and ammunition. Two items are shown under the headings 'E. 16. Reichswehr Ministry (Factory Fund)' and 'E. 17. General Finance Administration (Destruction of Plant, &c.)'. Under the former appear the following sub-titles:—

Purchase of special machinery, power plant, etc.;

Purchase of gauges, tools, etc.;

Reconstruction and separation of military from civil workshops as demanded by the Control Commission;

Acquisition of patent rights, etc.;

while the second heading is amplified as follows:—

Compensation for destruction of plant ordered by the Control Commission;

Disarmament Costs;

Destruction of fortifications.

The following table shows the money voted under these headings:—

<i>Year</i>	<i>E. 16 R.M.</i>	<i>E. 17 R.M.</i>
1926 . .	11,059,280	18,165,000
1927 . .	16,000,000	5,000,000
1928 . .	10,000,000	2,500,000
1929 . .	Nil	2,150,000
Totals . .	37,059,280	27,815,000

It will be seen, therefore, that in the last four years a sum of R.M. 64,874,280, or nearly 3½ million Pounds Sterling, has been handed over to armament firms, and it would appear that a large proportion of this has been expended on what can be generally described as preparations for industrial mobilization.

### 11. *Military Budgets*

A study of the figures of the purely military budgets is of equal, if not greater interest. In 1926, the Minister of War (Herr Gessler), in his budget speech in the Reichstag, quoted the cost to the Reichswehr of the various types of weapons in use. These figures have been applied to the various items in the 1927-28 military budget, and it has been found that the sums voted were largely in excess of those required to provide the replacements in weapons authorized by the Peace Treaty. In the case of small arms the excess provision was over 100 per cent., for machine guns the excess was approximately 1,000 per cent., while that for artillery was more than 1,200 per cent. The total excess in these three natures of weapons amounted to R.M. 20,086,000, or over one million pounds sterling. A similar excess provision has been found as regards other material. Though no figures are available as to the cost of a trench mortar in Germany, taking the authorized annual replacement as a basis, the price of each mortar works out at over R.M. 100,000, or twice the cost of a field gun. The corresponding weapon in the British Army costs about £40.

The total army budget for 1928-29, £24,817,000 showed an increase of £1,250,000 over 1927-28, the year for which the above figures are quoted, but the estimates for the current year, 1929-30, dropped to £24,174,000 and a further reduction of £1,500,000 was made when the estimates were presented. This saving was, however, effected mainly by the cancellation of manœuvres and such things as the reduction of expenditure on the barrack building programme.

It would appear, therefore, that the over-estimation of money requirements for the various items in the German military budget is a normal policy, and I am still of the opinion that this is done deliberately with the object of providing the necessary finance for certain activities prohibited by the Peace Treaty, such as experimenting in forbidden weapons, building up reserve stocks and subsidising certain firms who are potential manufacturers of war material.

## 12. Conclusion

In view of the information at my disposal, of which the above is a brief resumé, I am still of opinion that the present Reichsheer is not a menace to the peace of Europe. It would appear that the military leaders of Germany recognise the impotence of the Reichsheer with its restricted organization and equipment, and, while they are undoubtedly doing their best to make it as efficient a weapon as possible for defensive use in a sudden emergency, it is in the future rather than in the present that their main interest lies. Outwardly they are observing to a large extent the dictate of the Treaty of Versailles, but at the same time they are endeavouring by secret means to evade the restrictions imposed by that Treaty, with a view to laying the foundations for a large expansion at some future date, when the political situation may permit it. Their immediate problem, therefore, is not to prepare the present Germany Army for war, but to organize the nation as a whole, and industry in particular, so that it may be ready once more to convert itself into a war machine, should the necessity arise, and in the meantime to prevent the military spirit from dying out in Germany.

G. F. MILNE, C.I.G.S.

WAR OFFICE, February 11, 1930

## APPENDIX A. Germany: Military Budgets

Year	Army	Navy	Air Force
1924-25 . . .	£17,414,144	£5,123,233	Nil
(See Note 1)			(See Note 3)
1925-26 . . .	20,311,146	7,676,574	"
1926-27 . . .	23,412,437	9,827,118	"
1927-28 . . .	23,561,511	10,956,319	"
1928-29 . . .	24,817,659	10,583,774	"
1929-30 . . .	24,173,615	9,886,135	"

*Note 1.* These figures are actual expenditures, except for the year 1929-30 which are estimates only.

*Note 2.* Since the presentation of 1929-30 estimates, the German Cabinet has decided to cut the army budget by £1,500,000; a reduction has also been made in the naval budget.

*Note 3.* Article 198 of the Treaty of Versailles stated:—'The armed forces of Germany must not include any military or naval air forces.'

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